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THE STRUGGLE IN THE BALKANS

MORALLY, Mr. Roosevelt's speech on Saturday was a declaration of war upon the Axis: America, as he put it, has "gone into action." It has profoundly influenced the calculations of statesmen all over the world. More especially in the Balkans the outlook has grown for the moment at least much brighter. Ten days ago Jugoslavia was written off as an inevitable loss: she would collapse in isolation as all her neighbours had done. But the days passed without a surrender: the Belgrade correspondents reported the rally of popular opinion to the Greek cause and ours: finally, her mobilisation proceeded steadily. Many happenings in the outer world must have contributed to this more resolute attitude. There was the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill and the President's speech. There was the certainty that British land forces will help the Greeks, if and when the German army in Bulgaria attacks. Our forces in Africa scored fresh and notable successes against the Italians. By a skilful amphibian operation, in which Indian troops played the leading part, backed by the Navy's guns and some Somali levies, Berbera was recaptured and an unpleasant little incident obliterated. Round Tripoli the R.A.F. was active to a degree that may foreshadow further operations. In Abyssinia all the invading armies continued their advance.

All this meant much, but the chief event that must have impressed calculating minds in Belgrade was the dismal failure of yet another ambitious Italian offensive in Albania. The Duce was on the spot to reap the laurels of the expected victory. Massed forces attempted to break through the Greek lines on a narrow front of 2½ miles near Tepeleni. During a week incessant frontal attacks were delivered. All were repulsed with crippling losses, and the Greeks, after taking several thousand prisoners, yielded not a yard of ground. This great effort seems now to be over and observers on the spot predict that a couple of months or so will pass before the exhausted Italians dare attack again. It is probable that this offensive held a definite place in the Axis time-table. It was necessary for what courtesy calls Italian prestige that the Duce should score some success before the German attack begins. It must not be too obvious that it required two Great Powers to defeat the Greeks. So the Germans waited for their partner to score. He is in a worse case than before. What then will the Germans do?

The Germans are probably reluctant to launch an attack on Greece while Jugoslavia, uncommitted and at heart hostile, stands mobilised on their flank. Nor is that all. Our own view has always been that if (1) the Greeks can still immobilise the Italians in Albania and if (2) they can count on British support in Thrace, there is a good chance of stopping a German attack across the Rhodope range through the narrow Struma and Mesta valleys. What would be really dangerous would be a simultaneous drive down the Vardar valley and railway straight at Salonika. In short, what the Germans urgently want from the Jugoslavs is that they should open this Vardar route to their forces. The negotiations drag on in Belgrade. So far as we can sum them up, they amount to this: Jugoslavia refuses to join the Axis: she may sign some vague Pact of Friendship, and she will sell her wheat and pigs in the only market open to her, that of Germany, but she is stubbornly opposed to opening the gates of the Vardar. Between them, Mr. Roosevelt, General Wavell and General Papagos have blocked that road.

All this is well, but there may be something better. If we may believe the *New York Times*, Marshal Chakmak, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, is on his way to Belgrade. This visit is said to mean that he will there co-ordinate with the Jugoslav Staff their arrangement for defending their respective "zones of security." By this phase they mean (1) that the Jugoslavs could not tolerate a hostile occupation of Salonika, while the Turks could not allow an invader to hold the eastern end of Greek Thrace, where the Maritsa serves as their frontier. We cannot put entire faith in this optimistic account, though it comes from a sober source. If true, it would mean that the Turks and Jugoslavs together would veto any deep German penetration into Greek territory. And it may be true. Watching the boldness of London and Washington, with an eye also on the mood of Moscow, Ankara and Belgrade may simultaneously have reached the conclusion that the Balkan Peninsula is capable of defence. It was not doomed when Sofia capitulated.

The Far East

General Chiang Kai-shek has now given an explanation for his suppression of the 4th Route Army. In a severe speech he declares that the Communists have been extending their army without permission, occupying new territories beyond the areas allocated to them, and in a variety of other ways breaking their promise to act, not as a separate army, but as part of the National Army of China. He accuses them, in fact, of setting up a State within a State. It is suggested that since Chiang has always feared Communist influence, some new factor is necessary to explain his action now. No evidence, however, has been produced to justify the allegation, boldly published by the Communist Party in America and re-echoed here, that Chiang has been influenced by Britain and America to liquidate the Communists. Our information is, on the contrary, that fearing that civil strife in China would strengthen Japan, the British and American Ambassadors at Chunking have both urged caution on Chiang-Kai-shek. It is more likely that Chiang for the first time finds himself in a position to tackle the situation which has long troubled him. Japan is now completely bogged in China, and turning its attention increasingly to a threat to European interests in the Pacific. The Generalissimo, in fact, began his campaign to move the 4th Route Army from the south of the Yangtse as long ago as last autumn. He now finds himself strong enough to risk a quarrel with those who may some day be rivals to his power. Though *Pravda* warns the Generalissimo that he is running the risk of civil war, Soviet aid continues to go to Chungking, and Molotov is apparently prepared to meet Matsuoka on friendly terms in Moscow. The betting is perhaps against a Russian-Japanese agreement, though in these days of odd diplomacy one cannot rule out as impossible an agreement between Japan and the U.S.S.R. which would deal with frontiers problems in Northern China, perhaps with the future of the island of Saghalien and other matters, and which would yet permit the U.S.S.R. to continue sending aid to Chungking. All the evidence suggests that Japan is concentrating her forces by air, sea and land for an eventual attack on the Dutch East Indies and Singapore. Presumably Japan hopes to play the game that Mussolini also planned—to wait for the moment of Britain's extreme difficulty to launch her attack. But if Great Britain continues to grow stronger with American aid, if the U.S.A. and Britain continue to show a firm front and a good understanding with China in the Far East, and if the Germans are held in the Balkans or at the Straits, Matsuoka's visit to Berlin may lead to no results; and it might then happen, as the American press is suggesting, that the Japanese Foreign Minister would continue his journey from Berlin to London and Washington. We do not hope that Japan will be detached from the Axis, but it is at least possible that doubt may arise in the minds of the Japanese about the wisdom of whole-hearted collaboration with Hitler.

Eggs or Racing

The Battle of the Atlantic is on and one direct result is the intensification of the food problem illustrated by the progressively extending list of rationed commodities. Differential rationing makes a welcome appearance; if it means that a higher proportion of the available cheese goes to miners and agricultural workers who most need it, no one will complain. Perhaps it is a sign of our innate strength that we can still afford to debate the issue of racehorses versus hens; although at first sight it seems fantastic that there can be any doubt about the matter. The poultry farmers and pig keepers—to say nothing of the people who consume their products—find it difficult to agree to the drastic reduction of feeding-stuffs while over 2,000 racehorses are allotted 16 lbs. of good oats a day. They cannot appreciate why racing should continue on a considerable scale with its consequent absorption of human and material resources. Their protests are countered by the enthusiastic champions of bloodstock who believe that the Peninsular War was won by the Hunts and that this war will be no exception. As far as the preservation of bloodstock as a valuable post-war industry is concerned, this could be met by temporarily deporting the horses to Ireland, or better, to Canada or the United States. As far as the entertainment of the Forces and munition workers is concerned, there are conceivable substitutes for horse and dog racing. In any case the argument does not turn on the question whether the protesters are busybodies or Stigginses, but on such hard facts as the equivalence of a racehorse or hunter's ration in terms of pig and hen food. If, as is asserted, the ration of oats for one racehorse would furnish the daily grain meal of 125 hens, this is the basis for a speedy Ministerial decision even if the total saving of poultry and eggs is statistically small.

Economic Notes (*by An Industrial Correspondent*)

The most important announcement in Ernest Bevin's broadcast last Sunday was that, at long last, training allowances for munition workers are to be put on a reasonable footing, so that trainees will get a living wage during their period of preparation for productive work. The Minister of Labour did not say what the new rates were to be; but he spoke of them as if they were to mean much more than another shilling or two on top of the existing allowances. Ever since last summer, when the drive to train workers for the munition factories was supposed to begin, it has been obvious that no proper training scheme could be practicable without proper pay. But the officials at the Ministry clung tight to their old idea—that training was meant for down-and-outs who had been long out of work, and that the granting of a few shillings over and above the U.A.B. payment was generosity itself. When trainees had to be drawn from workers previously in well-paid jobs, such as printers, little concessions were made, by raising the allowance by small increments. But the general attitude towards the trainees remained as before, and came near to wrecking the entire scheme. Now, presumably, this stupid policy is to be given up. Indeed, the policy of "industrial concentration," which means throwing many thousands out of employment in non-essential trades, would be unworkable if these workers were expected to subsist on hopelessly inadequate incomes during their periods of training for work on munitions; and it would also be impracticable to demand—with the threat of compulsion in the background—the large numbers of women volunteers for munition work for whom Ernest Bevin is now appealing. So training allowances are at last to be raised to a tolerable wage level, and the Government's training schemes are at last to be given a chance of success.

* * *

For the rest, Bevin announced compulsory registration of men aged 41–45 who are not working in essential trades, and of women aged 20 and 21. As far as the men are concerned, this is part of the comb-out of the less essential trades, and will catch many who will not be reached directly by the new plans for "industrial concentration." There must be many men of these ages in the distributive trades, for example, including small traders as well as shop assistants and managers. The distributive trades, indeed, constitute the next great problem in the field of man-power. Concentration is extraordinarily difficult in their case, both because there will be immense opposition to the shutting down of one-man businesses and because there is the standing hostility between the private traders and the Co-ops. Any proposal to hand over private trade to a Co-op, or *vice versa*, will raise up a pretty storm. But I don't see how the Government can avoid having before long to grasp this nettle.

* * *

As for the women who are to register, the object is to secure recruits for the A.T.S. and other women's services, as well as for the munition factories; and the intention seems to be that the women after registration shall be interviewed and persuaded to volunteer for one form or another of useful work. If this method secures a sufficient response—as for the time being it very likely will, given tactful handling—there will be no need to resort to compulsion. But a great deal will depend on the adequacy of the arrangements made for the care of children during working hours. The Government now proposes to pay a part of the cost of this, but not on at all a generous basis. Surely it would be very much better to make this care of children completely a public affair, and to meet the cost out of public funds, at any rate in those parts of the country in which the demand for female labour is so large that it cannot be met without calling on a large proportion of the married women with fairly young children. Apparently, the provision of care centres is still to be left mainly to the local authorities. Are they equipped to deal with it? In Lancashire and the West Midlands at any rate, there is much to be said for the State taking over the job, and doing it on a uniform basis over large areas.

* * *

Lord Stamp, having escaped from the Cabinet offices, where he had got the worst of the war on the home front which rages continuously between the rival Cabinet secretariats, lashed out in defence of the railway shareholders at the L.M.S. Annual Meeting. The gist of his argument was that, though it was true that railway shareholders were doing better than before the war, they had every right to do better, because they were not getting a square deal before. If I agreed with Lord Stamp that it is the public's business to bolster up the profits of private persons, I should not quarrel with this argument; for the railways were doing badly before the war, and, in the long run, looked like doing worse. The war has been a godsend to them, thanks to that extraordinary railway agreement which the

present Minister of Transport admits that he heartily dislikes. But the moral is, not that the shareholders' profits ought to be bolstered up by the State to levels which cannot possibly be maintained in times of peace, but that the railways ought to be nationalised out of hand. Public purchase, at pre-war average values, would be favourable to the shareholders; for there was, apart from the war, a likelihood of a further long-run fall in values. The State, owning the railways, could proceed to stabilise rates and charges, meeting any net losses out of public funds. Why is this important? Because railway charges affect the prices of practically all classes of goods, and the further advances in them which will soon be inevitable if the railways are left in private hands will contribute seriously to the inflationary movement. A railway subsidy, under public ownership, would be cheap: it is as necessary for checking inflation as the numerous subsidies which the State is already paying out in order to keep down the prices of indispensable goods.

Freedom in the House (*from a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

To enable Members to explain the "Concentration of Industry" scheme to their constituents Lyttelton addressed them in one of the Committee Rooms. Judgment of Lyttelton's capacity as a Cabinet Minister is still suspended. Everyone appreciates his considerable charm, but he appears to treat the House as a meeting of shareholders of a rather successful company, who should be given only the minimum of information about the company's operations. Asked to reduce the discussion upstairs to memorandum form, Lyttelton felt it was too complicated to be reduced to writing. Members felt that if a scheme cannot be put on paper the thought behind it must be woolly. The real test of both Lyttelton and his scheme for industry will shortly take place on the floor of the House.

The smoking-room buzzes with gossip about the Labour Party. At the Party meeting yesterday, I understand, Attlee failed to secure that rigid obedience to Party decisions which he and his fellow Labour Ministers would like to see. Apparently towards the end of a lengthy discussion in which the weight of the speeches went against Ministerial desires, Aneurin Bevan made a brilliant and statesmanlike speech pleading for a measure of freedom which should be used by Members with a full sense of responsibility. In the end no resolution was put to the meeting, so that Members are in effect left with the freedom to criticise for which they asked.

That is a victory for sound Parliamentary Government, which was jeopardised by the decision to keep on the Whips when the National Government was formed. With all Parties in the Government no Party was left to carry out the duties of opposition. The onus of criticism must therefore fall on individual Members. Responsible Conservative back-benchers like Irving Albery and Wardlaw Milne obviously realised from the outset that Ministers could only be kept up to scratch if they were not sure of a Parliamentary majority. They did not hesitate to criticise trenchantly where they felt criticism was in the National interest. The Liberals too have played their part.

Criticism of the Government by Labour back-benchers produced a crisis in the Party. Labour leaders went into a Government with a Conservative majority without undertakings of any kind. In return for Labour participation in the Government, critical back-benchers felt, it was the duty of the Labour Ministers to see that war measures took account of those fundamental principles for which Labour stands. This in large measure they have failed to do. The method of suppression of the *Daily Worker* by fiat of the Home Secretary, the failure to abolish completely the Household Means Test, the MacDonald Act are instances in point.

The B.B.C. ban upon artists who supported the People's Convention is the latest example. Attlee said the attitude of the Government was that there should be no discrimination against artists by the B.B.C. because of their political opinions. The next day Duff Cooper flatly contradicted this by implying that when artists exercise their right to freedom of speech they cannot expect the privilege of being employed by the B.B.C. This introduces into this country the Nazi principle which says "If you do not agree with me, you shall not earn your living." Had Attlee, Greenwood and Bevin been determined to preserve freedom of speech, they would have taken Duff Cooper into a corner and forced him, with the full strength of Left opinion behind them, to put an end to the B.B.C. ban.

Of course, they could have done it, but as they are weak-kneed it is vital to the future of Parliamentary Government in this country, it is even more vital to the war effort, that Aneurin Bevan and others like him should be free to make a stand against Government action on the floor of the House when that action runs counter to fundamental democratic principles.

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"GONE INTO ACTION"

For him who has ears to hear there was a new quality in Mr. Roosevelt's speech of last Saturday. Much of it we had heard before: with freshly coined and felicitous phrases he exposed the threat of the dictatorships, reaffirmed his faith in democracy (without again discussing what it meant), and pledged America's material aid to our cause. But in these earlier speeches Mr. Roosevelt was pleading with his countrymen, awakening their fears, educating them, and pointing out the path he would have them tread. In this speech he spoke as the President of a nation which has made up its mind. He did not plead or argue: he drew conclusions from a decision already taken by a newly-elected Congress after ample debates in both Houses.

The speech means that America is now committed without reserves to Britain's side in the war. In truth Britain no longer fights alone; almost all sections of American opinion in lesser degree work for the defeat of Hitler. And more. Mr. Roosevelt has pledged American aid to China and Greece as well as Britain; fantastically late we have for defence purposes the outline of that structure of collective resistance to Fascist aggression which at an earlier stage might have prevented war. The President promises "unqualified, immediate, all-out aid," whatever "sacrifices" this may require, "until total victory has been won." An identification so complete carries with it conclusions that we are entitled to draw and raises issues of our joint war-aims which cannot long be neglected. Mr. Roosevelt has the gift of stirring speech, but he is no mere rhetorician and all the world, Berlin and Rome as well as Washington and London, realises that he means exactly what he says. Americans have decided that Britain's war must be won; they see a war between themselves alone and Hitler as the alternative. The division of tasks, risks and responsibilities between the two countries becomes a matter of planning for our joint strategical staff. As the war machine assigns some of us, according to our age and capacity, to the army and others to industry, so must Washington and London, in the closest contact as allies, assign to each of the two nations its role. The reasons for the present division of labour between us conform to our common interests. Beyond the range of Hitler's bombers, with its raw materials on its own soil and an indefinitely expansible supply of labour, America is best occupied in organising her giant industries for the use of our army and our fleet. Even so, the American Navy has played a valuable part against the Axis, for it has so far neutralised Japanese sea-power. It is probable that even up to the end this broad division of responsibilities will hold good. But we may now hope, if the need should arise, for some relaxation of the cast-iron rule that limited American aid to material things. The list of these things, as we gratefully note, expands daily: food is now prominent in it and ships as well. But of what use would it be that Americans should build "a bridge of boats" across the Atlantic, if the new swarms of the enemy's submarines could break it? During this spring and summer the use of that bridge may often be interrupted. In that event, may we hope that the Anglo-American Staff which plans our common "total victory" will modify the disposition of the Allied forces? If American destroyers flying the Stars and Stripes are needed to ensure the safety of that bridge, we cannot suppose that a nation which has taken its decision will hesitate.

Not the least welcome passage in this remarkable speech looked beyond the struggle to the settlement. What happened once before, the President seemed to be assuring us, shall not happen again. "When the dictatorships disintegrate . . . our country must continue to play its great part in the period of world reconstruction for the good of humanity." Some hope that these are not idle words may be found in the fact that Mr. Roosevelt has the technique of leadership that Mr. Wilson lacked. This man, before the struggle ceases, may have fired Senate and people with a passion to play their part in the task of rebuilding. The phrase covers a large variety of possibilities; we may find some encouragement in the fact that the President and such men as Mr. Wallace, Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Winant, who now represent the United States, understand what President Wilson never understood—that the problems of Europe are largely economic; and they bring with them, not the mentality of Wall Street, but the experience of the New Deal. Mr. Roosevelt spoke of the four freedoms that he would establish—above all "the freedom from fear"

which includes them all. In the foreground are the two political evils we are chiefly fighting, the fear of a tyrant's arbitrary will and of his robot armies. When the immediate fight is over, the perspective will change, and we shall have to face the fact that in this modern world it was the fear of want that brought despotism back. Fascism found it easy to enslave the masses because behind its brutalities there shone its deceptive promise to provide a New Order of economic security. We cannot too soon work out between Washington and London our own plans for a democratic order that will give security with freedom. Neither ships nor planes nor legions of armed men will give us the "total victory" the President has promised, until we have conveyed to the European masses, in field as well as factory, a belief in our will and our power, with American aid, to rid them of their fear of insecurity.

SOVIET NEUTRALITY

(From a Special Correspondent)

THE Foreign Secretary is due home soon from his useful Middle Eastern mission and we hear reliably that upon his return Mr. Eden intends to take up the tangle of Anglo-Soviet relations. Unfortunately, there is no fancy trick for untying that knot. Without offering any glib solutions, however, it is worth facing the questions which the British and Soviet Governments may shortly be examining and about which, despite those who are defeatist over Anglo-Russian relations, something might yet be accomplished.

During their last talk on February 1st Mr. Molotov reaffirmed to Sir Stafford Cripps that British recognition of the Baltic states' merger with the Soviet Union is an essential condition for improving relations. Such recognition should not be ruled out. Members of the Government and of Parliament who acquiesced in Britain's *de jure* recognition of Italy's conquest of Abyssinia and *de facto* recognition of Italy's annexation of Albania have forfeited the right to deny similar consideration to Russia's action in the Baltic countries. It is not necessary to swallow the tall tale of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians arising as one Balt and tossing up their caps as a welcome to the Soviet protector. It is much more to the point that Russia's primary purpose in incorporating the Baltic nations was to erect one more outpost against Nazi expansion and, however cynical the concealment of this true motive, there is nothing objectionable to us in a Soviet strategy directed against Germany.

Yet if Britain is to consider Russia's wishes regarding the Baltic, Moscow must also show a more friendly spirit. If Mr. Eden raises the question of Soviet supplies to Germany, it will not do for Mr. Molotov to tell him to mind his own business, as Lord Halifax was told. For Britain at war cannot be indifferent to the transit of foreign goods across Siberia or to Russia's direct provision of raw materials and food to Germany. To take a more trivial but symptomatic affair, it is displeasing and unfriendly that the Russians should treat the ambassador of Great Britain, Sir Stafford Cripps, as though he had chicken-pox. In the past four and a half months Mr. Molotov has received Sir Stafford only once. The Russians protest that Mr. Molotov is above all Prime Minister and only secondarily Foreign Secretary and that Mr. Maisky does not complain because Mr. Churchill fails to see him every month or so. But that reply becomes shoddy when Mr. Molotov, too busy for Sir Stafford, somehow manages more frequently to see von Schulenburg, the Nazi ambassador.

Nevertheless there is the more reason for leaving the Baltic question open to discussion because, for the first time since the outbreak of war, Moscow's diplomacy has at least tentatively taken a stand against Germany. Russia's March 3rd note to Sofia bluntly condemned the admission of German armed forces into Bulgaria. By addressing his rebuke to Sofia instead of Berlin, Stalin reminded us of the ineffectual behaviour of the husband who, upon finding his wife on the couch in her lover's arms, stamped out of the house and sold the couch. Anyhow, never until now had Stalin publicly branded not Britain but Germany as guilty of spreading the war.

Moscow's second diplomatic act, which followed the note to Sofia and has never been officially announced, is of far greater importance: the Soviet Government notified to Turkey its intention loyally to respect the 1925 Russo-Turkish treaty of non-aggression and friendship. If this means anything, and I think it does, it is an assurance that Russia will refrain from impeding Turkish resistance of German aggression. It may mean more. It is too early to say whether Russia would in certain circumstances go further and supply armaments and raw materials to a threatened or embroiled Turkey.

Moscow's impotent anger at the German absorption of Bulgaria and the subsequent Soviet gesture to Turkey are at least a strong argument against the theory that Russia and Germany have secretly agreed on the partitioning of the Balkans and Near East.

Do not the creation of new German bases on the Black Sea coasts of Rumania and Bulgaria and the growing German menace to the Dardanelles provide an opening for Britain and Russia to re-examine their relations? The answer is no, if you believe—as do some men who influence British policy—that Stalin prefers the victory of the Axis, weakened by war, to the victory of the Democratic Powers. Geographically and militarily even an exhausted Germany is an infinitely greater danger to Russia than any other potential foe, and Stalin, who is no fool, must know that. Whatever suspicions Soviet leaders cherish towards a possibly victorious Britain, it is now, to-day, that they see Germany poised within easy striking distance of the Straits, while it is the British who are helping Russia's friend, Turkey. British newspapers have reported from Ankara that Turkey might even allow British troops on Turkish soil. Britain has made clear that she will not shirk her full responsibility to Greece and Turkey if Germany begins moving her new Balkan war front against them. This is perhaps the right time for Britain and Russia to exchange declarations of neutrality. We can even imagine that, were this done, it would facilitate resumption of Soviet-Turkish mutual assistance negotiations which failed in October, 1939. It might be worth while for Mr. Eden to consider this idea, if he has not already done so.

We have mentioned indications against the existence of a Russo-German agreement ladling out Balkan and Levantine spheres. We have also noted signs of Soviet uneasiness and distress at Germany's approach to the Straits. We could fancy Russia surgically "doing a Poland" on Turkey if the Turks showed signs of collapsing. Not a single responsible person believes Turkey will abjectly yield to Hitler, and we have every reason to expect the Turks to fight valiantly if attacked. The Turkish President is reported to have sent a well-bred but slightly bored and distinctly non-committal reply to Hitler's syrupy message of good will. President Ineonu is thought to have been encouraged by signs that Moscow's greatest immediate concern is to keep the Germans from the Dardanelles.

Russia's anxiety concerning the Straits is likely to whet her appetite for an accommodation with Japan and for easing her Far Eastern flank. The Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Matsuoka, appears to have selected a favourable moment for his visit to Moscow, where he may negotiate next week and return in April, possibly to conclude a Soviet-Japanese agreement after his talks in Berlin and Rome. Until lately it looked as if Japan were engaged in a one-way courtship with Moscow and as if the Russians could name their own price, but Japan's bargaining power has been raised by the Germans' proximity to the Straits.

A Russo-Japanese non-aggression pact is in the air, as well as agreements regarding Saghalien, Manchukuo-Outer Mongolian frontier demarcation, fisheries and reciprocal enlargement of trade. The familiar question is again popping up: will Russia sell out China? The conflict between Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communist armies has led Americans to suspect that Russia is blackmailing Chiang to give the Communists greater power, but proof of this is lacking. Far Eastern specialists agree that Stalin cannot conceivably wish Japan to be helped out of the Chinese bog. However solemnly Matsuoka and Molotov may discuss a Russo-Japanese pact, the Russians know that when their Japanese friend reaches Berlin he is quite likely to freshen and sharpen secret Japanese-German military plans against the Soviet Union—even if they are provisionally restored to the refrigerator. Stalin probably dreams of encouraging Japan to drive south towards collision with Britain and America, just as certain leaders of British diplomacy, with less chance of having their dreams come true, would tempt Japan to go north at the risk of fighting Russia. But yet in this complicated situation it remains true that Britain, the United States and Russia have a common interest in backing China, and, without easy optimism, it can be said that this terrain to-day is still important common ground.

A leading Turkish statesman lately remarked to this writer that for Britain, Soviet neutrality—real neutrality—is even more valuable than American participation in the war on the British side. An exaggeration no doubt, but it possesses a kernel of truth. The Turk meant that an all-in Russian alliance with Germany would immeasurably increase Hitler's chance of victory.

In delving into Anglo-Soviet relations, Mr. Eden certainly will have plenty of incentive. And the Straits, which in another century were a chasm dividing Britain and Russia, may perhaps to-day be a bridge between them.

THE PROBLEM OF GERMANY

In a famous passage in the *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Mr. J. M. Keynes wrote of himself at Versailles as compelled to think as a European, while M. Clemenceau thought of the war and the peace simply as a round which the French had won in the eternal struggle between France and Germany. There is now an effort on foot in this country to implant in British minds Clemenceau's conception of Europe. Britain and Germany are now, it seems, to be regarded as the eternal and inevitable enemies. We won a round in 1919, we must deliver a knock-out blow this time, and then for as long as possible hold down our enemy and prevent him from rising again. This simple view is ably stated in recent issues of the *Nineteenth Century* over the signature of the Editor. The questions that he raises in these articles and the attack that he launches upon those who are generically but loosely described as the Left, are of the utmost importance both for the conduct of this war and for the peace that is to follow it.

The view of England and Germany as perpetual enemies is historical nonsense. Not to go farther back we may say that from Waterloo up to 1902 British policy was to aid the unity and strength of Germany as an offset to French power. This was also British policy after the last war, and it is a remarkable fact that Mr. F. A. Voigt, now Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* and then on the staff of the *Manchester Guardian*, was one of the most powerful advocates in this country for what is broadly called the pro-German and anti-French view. His feelings about France while French troops were still in the Ruhr were as impassioned and vitriolic as his feelings now are about Germany. I can still remember the deep impression he made by a series of brilliant leading articles in which he asked how there could be any hope for Europe or any chance for the new Germany as long as the eyes of that peaceful and cultured people were dazzled by the gleam of French bayonets on their territory. During the whole of that period he devoted his great energies and abilities to denouncing "the hegemony of France" in Europe, and the effort, futile as he prophesied, to keep down a great nation by alliances with smaller peoples, whose brutality to their own minorities he personally investigated and exposed. Further, as *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in Berlin, Mr. Voigt consistently built up a picture of that "other Germany," which he now denounces as the most mischievous and dangerous delusion of the Left. So impressed was he with the spectacle of this other Germany that in a period immediately preceding Hitler's advent to power, he day by day assured English readers that the *Reichsbanner* would save Germany from Hitler, and I well remember both the admiration he then felt for the German Communists in contrast to the effete leaders of German Social Democracy, and the eloquence with which he explained that Socialism in Germany, unlike that in England, represented a corporate life and a fine strength of organisation which offered the best hope for the future of Europe. Long after Hitler came to power Mr. Voigt was an enthusiastic champion of the "other Germany," writing with humanitarian passion about the heroic resistance to the Nazis displayed particularly by the Communists and the Protestant Churches. I particularly recall an article in which he declared that Hitler could not go to war or even fully arm, because he dared not put rifles into the hands of German workers.

He now paints a picture of the Europe he hopes that we shall set up after this war. Rejoicing that the word "Nazi" "has begun to disappear from popular speech" and is "being replaced by the 'Hun,'" he tells us that we should offer the Italians an unrevengeful peace which will make them our allies in the future, that we should build up the frontiers of Poland, which must be "determined by strategy above everything else. She must have a land frontier that can be held by her army, she must have aerial bases which can enable her to strike at the aggressor before he can strike at her, and she must have naval bases that will make it possible for her to become a Baltic Power." These arrangements will "not make Poland invincible. But they will enable her to hold her own and more, until her enemy begins to break under pressure of Poland's western Allies. The frontiers of Czechoslovakia must also be drawn according to strategic needs." That precisely was what the Allies did at Versailles with results which Mr. Voigt was among the first to expose. As to Germany he does not propose anything so impossible as a "Carthaginian peace." To destroy a city was possible; it is impossible, as he rightly says, to destroy "a country of eighty million people living in the heart of civilised Europe." The Germans must therefore expect "if England is to win the peace as well as the war, that, while they should be free to engage in trade and industry and all the arts of peace, they shall not be free ever again to follow the arts of war." With this last statement I heartily agree. To cure the Germans of the aggressiveness which has ruled their policy for the last eighty years is of paramount importance. But cannot Mr. Voigt see that the Europe he is proposing to build after the war is precisely that which Clemenceau conceived after the last war. The historical and economic factors which made it impossible to maintain a French hegemony then would operate to an even greater degree to make a British-French hegemony impossible after this war. If eighty million Germans in the heart of civilised Europe are to be allowed to trade, they cannot remain powerless, and the same search for national unity will begin again. If they do not carry out their obligations under the new Versailles, presumably we or the French (Mr. Voigt says nothing about the Americans) will again have to occupy the Ruhr, and the Voigts of the next generation will presumably again denounce the intolerable absurdity of the attempt to keep down a great people with bayonets. There would be no economic, let alone a moral, basis for such a Europe. We should have fought an appalling war in order again to establish anarchy in Europe—and a Europe which for technical reasons has even more need of unity than in 1919. Meanwhile the Germans would again have the advantage of being free from the burden of armaments and be able to devote their great talents and resources to building up an overwhelming trade position, while the Poles, the Czechs, the French and ourselves would pour out our riches in aeroplanes and guns. Mr. Voigt, unlike the Bourbons, once learnt something and has forgotten everything.

In his attack on Left-wing writings in the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Voigt makes, incidentally, some shrewd comments. It is true (though he does not state the point very clearly) that the idealistic Left has thought too much in terms of ideology divorced from problems of power. It is true that the extreme Left idealises "the masses," that there has been much wishful thinking about the U.S.S.R., and that many who talk to-day about revolution in Europe have not thought out its implications, and that some who profess the philosophy of liberty and equality fail to admit the difficulties of reconciling those twin, but frequently conflicting, human ideals. When he goes on, however, to say that they have always been wrong and yet persist the more they are wrong in advocating the policies that have failed, when he assumes that all who have either championed the League or the idea of Collective Security, are mere dreamers and Utopians, he shows a really surprising incapacity to understand the nature of the conceptions he derides. The League was supported by people who hoped to build an international society free from recurrent wars; but its most immediate function was to serve as the instrument by which France and her allies hoped to maintain the Versailles settlement. To-day, without a formal League, he wants to produce the same settlement and the same grouping of Powers that met at Geneva: a British-French-Polish-Little Entente, to surround and keep down Germany. Similarly Collective Security was the phrase that described the common-sense idea of an alliance of Powers to prevent aggression. It was the only alternative to "appeasement," as Mr. Churchill well understood, when he launched his great campaign to revive the League and obtain the Soviet Alliance to the interests, as he repeated so often, of collective security. It may be held that, in view of the destruction of the League, the Left too long resisted the demand for rearmament, but, had the League Powers held together and fulfilled the Treaty obligations they had undertaken in forming the League, Germany would not have been permitted to rearm—it was Conservative and business policy to allow and indeed to aid German rearmament—and there would have been no Axis to defeat, This was the starkest realism and the war is the result not, as Mr. Voigt says, of the Left policy of collective security, but of a confused period in which the policy of the Left was never seriously tried and the appeasement policy of the Right was defeated. The one might have prevented war and the other kept us out of it for a considerable time: the confusion was fatal.

My object is not to convict Mr. Voigt of inconsistency nor to vindicate a particular school of thought. We have all made mistakes: in this terrific situation we should have been supermen if we had not. The problem before us is as intractable as any that ever confronted society, and I agree with Mr. Voigt that it is folly to think that any kind of Utopia will follow this or any war. Mr. Voigt agrees with me and the mass of his fellow countrymen in wanting above everything to prevent a recurrence of this war. He talks as if this were merely the problem of preventing Germany from rearming. But the problem of Germany is part of the problem of Europe and of our whole sick society. The worst service a publicist can now do is to allow people again to be deluded into thinking that war is due to the wickedness of one nation and it is idle to indict a people because they obey Totalitarian leaders. That is the nature of nationalism, as the

story of Japan, Italy and some other countries, which have started wars with as little justification as Hitler, convincingly demonstrate. No arrangement of strategic frontiers, no effort to make ourselves so strong, as Mr. Voigt urges, that we can defy any possible combination of hostile Powers, can begin to solve our problem. We need first the alliance of democratic forces in Europe: without them we cannot rebuild Europe, even if we could win the war. We need secondly a vivid realisation of the real needs of the ordinary inhabitant of Europe. To have any chance of success, we must remember what the men of Versailles forgot, that common people want, above everything else, security—security against hunger and exploitation, and security against the threat of the jackboot and the Gestapo. The German variety is the worst, but there are plenty of others. If we start from that basis of economic and political need for all the people of Europe, Poles, Czechs, French, British and Balkan no less than German, we may find it possible to build common economic and political institutions in which the phenomenon of Nazism cannot recur. In that lies our only hope.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

A LONDON DIARY

IN a courageous and modest letter to Mr. Ogilvie, Dr. Vaughan Williams has made the strongest protest within his power against the B.B.C.'s ban on artists of whose opinions the Governors disapprove. If the compositions of Alan Bush are to be banned from the British wireless, then, says Vaughan Williams, the B.B.C. is not the sort of organisation which he cares to allow to play his music. Speaking at the National Council of Civil Liberties protest meeting on Monday night on this subject, E. M. Forster announced that he was following the example of Vaughan Williams and refusing to do the two broadcasts that had been arranged. A difficult question at once arises. An admirable letter of protest was sent to Mr. Ogilvie, signed by such distinguished broadcasters as J. B. Priestley, Desmond MacCarthy, John Hilton, Vernon Bartlett and Julian Huxley; the younger generation was represented by Ritchie Calder, and David Low and H. N. Brailsford joined in the protest, which was of particular significance because they were both in the middle of a series of broadcasts to the United States. If all or some of these broadcasters were to resign, what would be the result? The issue would be put more plainly to the public, the focus of resistance to the Fascist type of control would be more definite. On the other hand, it may be said that the chief result would be to deprive listeners of the few really useful, interesting and educative speakers on the wireless, and to fulfil the ambitions of Sir Allan Powell and Conservative headquarters, who would obviously like to get rid of all progressive speakers. Such a protest would be effective if the B.B.C.'s ban really produces a counter-ban by a large body of popular broadcasters, actors, musicians and political speakers. But the boycott must be large enough to rouse listeners and seriously to embarrass the B.B.C. Governors.

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The speeches at this Civil Liberties meeting were fresh and encouraging. Beatrix Lehmann's comments cut like a knife; that kind of husky voice is useful on the platform as well as on the stage. Michael Redgrave and others did equally well with a case that certainly offers every opportunity. E. M. Forster was witty and effective. I think he was wrong in putting so much of the blame on Mr. Duff Cooper; Sir Allan Powell, I gather, is the chief villain of the piece. Mr. Ogilvie must share the blame because the Director-General of the B.B.C. ought not to acquiesce in decisions that make nonsense of its democratic pretensions, and of Duff Cooper it is enough to say that if he does not approve of the B.B.C. Governors dragging the British cause in the mud in this way, he ought not to defend them when they do so. And what a poor defence and wretched get-away he attempted! He conceded nothing on the question of principle, but talked of confusion about the Convention and implied that innocents who did not know what they were doing might be forgiven and taken back if they were good in future. Not the sort of apology that is likely to appeal to anyone of spirit. Admittedly there was some "confusion" about the Convention; Aleck Bourne and a number of others have stated that they supported the Convention without understanding its real import. But the principle, as Mr. Forster says, is not "freedom at the microphone"—complete freedom of broadcasting during a war is not a demand that anyone is making. The principle is "freedom of opinion away from the microphone," freedom for artists to hold and express their own opinions in their private lives. And Beatrix Lehmann and Mr. Forster were both caustic about Duff Cooper's statement that it was a "privilege and not a right" to broadcast. It is neither one nor the other. It is for some people a way of earning a living and for everyone a recognition that the public will be interested in what they have to contribute. The meanest part of the whole affair is the quiet blackmail of opinion which comes through economic pressure. Only a comparatively few stars can easily afford to give up broadcasting by way of protest; for the man or woman who lives by broadcasting as a musician, actor or technician it is an act of heroism to resign. The same remark applies to the staff of the B.B.C. who, as far as I can learn, almost all regard the ban as silly and dangerous. This is a matter about which public opinion must not rest. The issue at stake is the whole Fascist principle of totalitarian opinion. As for the Governors, Bernard Shaw sent a message saying "sack the lot." A drastic phrase, but essentially right. We must have a Board of Governors which does not imagine that the right way of fighting a Fascist war is morally to outrage every honest democrat.

* * *

The new attack on Priestley is part of a campaign, now in full swing, to represent people who advocate immediate reforms in our social system as dastards asking for social improvements as bribes to induce them to put their energies into the war. Mr. Churchill has the candour to admit that our social system has its faults, but he is absorbed in the military side of the war and it is easy for reactionaries, who were not always friends of Mr. Churchill, to cover up the fact that drastic social change is necessary for the conduct of the war; meanwhile their friends are stabilising their hold over the social structure and blackening the characters of those who want the changes carried out on an egalitarian basis. Mr. Churchill talks of "the forward march of the common people in all lands towards their just and true inheritance," but Mr. Hely-Hutchinson, the Tory M.P. for Hastings, seems really to believe that the pre-war economic system bestowed rewards strictly in accordance with merit, and he has just uttered a splenetic outburst because some clergymen in the five-minute talk before the morning 8 o'clock news have had the temerity to advocate equal opportunity and equal education for all children! Are the children of a drunkard to have the same opportunities as the offspring of a Hely-Hutchinson, he asks in effect, and apparently expects a thunderous "No" from the populace. As a useful corrective to this propaganda I recommend a study of the programme for a new democratic order as set forth in the series of pamphlets now being published by Kegan Paul at 1s. each. The title of the series is *The Democratic Order*. The editor is Francis Williams, who opens with a challenge to the whole Hely-Hutchinson brand of bigotry. Other contributors to date are Tom Wintringham, Sir George Stapledon, Herbert Read, Ritchie Calder, W. M. Macmillan, Douglas Jay and Ivor Jennings, and they are perverse enough to suggest reforms in the army, agriculture, the conditions for culture, housing, colonial government, finance and Parliament itself. I hope the sales will be deservedly large in the constituency of Hastings as well as elsewhere.

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Nothing in the conduct of the Pétain government has been more despicable than its agreement to hand over its German and Spanish refugees to the Axis. For many months it seemed that this threat had been forgotten. But I have now received a full account of the fate that has befallen Breitscheid and Hilferding. These two men were the ablest of the intellectuals who led the German Social Democratic Party. Both of them had held high ministerial offices under the Weimar Republic. Breitscheid is a remarkable orator and Hilferding an economist who has done outstanding original work. Both of them through Dr. Brüning's intervention had secured American visas and were waiting in Marseilles for a ship. In December they were about to sail for Oran on the way to Martinique, when they were suddenly packed off by the French authorities to Arles. What had happened? The quarrel between Pétain and Laval occurred on December 13th. It is now known that, by way of inflicting a humiliation on Vichy, the Germans made their first demand for the extradition of the two Socialist leaders four days later (December 17th). Over this the French managed to temporise. After a short stay at Arles, the two refugees, whom the French authorities treated at this stage with great courtesy, were brought back to Marseilles. Everything was done to speed their departure; they had their berths and all their papers and were about to sail, when they were again sent to Arles. At first the old courtesy was continued with many promises of protection, but on February 9th they were taken to the police station and told that their extradition had again been demanded. Though specious hints were made that they would be helped to escape to Spain, they were in fact carried by car to Vichy. There the atmosphere

changed; they were searched; they slept in police cells on straw and were not allowed to wash or shave. On February 10th they were driven to the frontier of the occupied zone and there handed over to the Germans. With these two exiles (Thyssen had preceded them) across the frontier went to the German pawnshop the last rag of Vichy honour.

* * *

Exactly one hundred years have passed since General Germanos raised the flag of Greek independence at Patras. Very fittingly the Anglo-Hellenic League is celebrating Greek Independence Day by a public meeting at 3 o'clock in the Queen's Hall on March 25th. The speakers will include Mr. Amery. The Englishman in the street will have his chance to express his sense of defending a common cause with the Greeks. It is an extraordinary moment for such a celebration of Greek freedom—all the more so because, internally, Greece, the birthplace of free thought, has gone so far in repressing it that, if I am rightly informed, Plato's *Republic*, not to mention the usual list of writers like Montaigne and Voltaire, are forbidden in public libraries and even in University studies. But in meeting the Fascist invader from outside, Greece's success against Mussolini has been as remarkable as the victory at Marathon, and by a strange irony of history in this life and death struggle Greece may find herself making a desperate attempt to defend her mountain passes against the Germans with the help, not only of Britain, but also of the Turks, from whom she won her independence one hundred years ago.

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At a Tribunal recently the chairman tried to catch out a young conscientious objector: "You know the story of Christ and the centurion? He commended the faith of the centurion, so I suppose He must have approved of his profession." The young man answered, "Christ also commended the faith of the harlot." I was not surprised to hear that this young man was successful in his application.

CRITIC

THE SPANISH GENTLEMAN

The ejection of the Mendoub suggests that Spain plans the early annexation of Tangier . . . and is not averse to assisting the German penetration of Morocco. . . . It is not clear how far this step conflicts with the agreement between Spain and this country.—*Times*. March 17th.

THE other side the Pyrenees
Where, leagued with all our enemies,
Franco exterminates at ease
The "Red" Republican,
His Fascist regime we support
For General Franco is a sport,
A *caballero*, or for short,
A Spanish gentleman.

True, Spain was to the Axis sold,
There Nazi murder-planes patrolled
And there, the world need not be told,
Italians also ran,
But though some Spaniards wish us ill
We cultivate New Spain's goodwill
The Generalissimo is still
A Spanish gentleman.

The swastika above Tangier
Just hoisted with a Spanish cheer
Does not officially appear
An anti-British plan,
Though when we ask what it may mean
(Arriving later on the scene)
The answer is a tangerine
From the Spanish Gentleman.

We do not care to make a fuss
With someone who is "one of us"
So fresh assistance we discuss
And joint proposals scan. . . .
But while some circles still acclaim
That hoary diplomatic game,
Most Britons have another name
For the Spanish gentleman.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to N. D. James.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

A nudist village with fire-spotters, warden and first-aid service is in full sway within twenty-one miles of London. Populated chiefly by mothers and children voluntarily evacuated for the duration, this nudist retreat even does its cooking, including careful use of the frying-pan, in the "altogether." "War conditions will convert more people than ever to the practice of nudism," a leading naturist told the *Sunday Pictorial*. "No greater antidote to frayed nerves and war strain exists than a holiday in a nudist camp," he said. —*Sunday Pictorial*.

I suggest that speakers in Children's Hour should not use the word "Hello" when addressing the children. Country children now invariably greet their elders with this word, spoken in anything but a respectful tone.—Letter in the *Radio Times*.

It is surely significant that 1776 is the number of the Lease and Lend Bill and also the date of the American Declaration of Independence.—Letter in *Times*.

Choked by a mass of meat measuring five inches, ——— (41), company director, of Grosvenor Square, Westminster, London, collapsed and died after dining at a West End hotel on smoked salmon and steak. A verdict of death by misadventure was recorded.—*Daily Papers*.

German fifth column activities in this country were long ago directed towards discrediting the Old Testament. We see the effect of them now in the neglect of the Commandment—"Remember thou keep Holy the Sabbath Day." Our Government have already opened the Cinemas on Sundays, now they decide to open the Theatres and Music Halls as well. We seem to be drifting towards a Continental Sabbath, without regard to the Fate that has befallen the Continent.—Advt. in *Daily Telegraph*.

THE HUMBUG OF FINANCE

WHY do the authorities prefer to requisition elementary schools instead of private hotels? Because they can be obtained cheaply or for nothing and this keeps down the cost of the war. Why don't we pay our soldiers on Australian standards? Because this would greatly increase the cost of the war. Why does the Government borrow instead of raising the necessary monies by taxation? Because it is only fair that posterity should bear some of the burden. Why should we write as many letters as possible? Because the increased postal revenue helps to pay for the war. Why collect money now from property owners under a War Damage Act? So as to provide a fund for rebuilding after the war. Why shall we all be poorer after the war? Because the country will have an enormously increased burden of debt to carry.

All these answers are fallacies and derived from what Mr. Keynes has denounced as the "humbug of finance." Humbug is a strong word; delusion would be kinder. (We shall all be poorer after the war is the Ingean lament, because nobody will have much money left). It would be too ridiculous, wrote Adam Smith, to go about seriously to prove that wealth does not consist in money or gold and silver, but in what money purchases and is valuable only for purchasing. Well, we all know that the real processes which go on behind the money veil are the important ones, but we all think we can use monetary shorthand and transcribe it into real longhand without difficulty when we please. We even take the transcription for granted and use the symbols for the real things. Usually this creates no misunderstanding, particularly when individual fortunes are under discussion, but when the symbols are applied nationally the fallacy of composition creeps in, and a host of errors follows. It has been pointed out time after time that the war has to be paid for as it is waged, but many people still feel uneasily that when Chancellors of the Exchequer talk about borrowing as a method of shifting some of the burden on to posterity, they are talking sense. Similarly, if a British soldier is paid 3*s*. a day, a German soldier 1 mark a day, and a French soldier 5 *frs*. a day, it seems obvious to many people that war is a much more expensive business for Britain than for the other countries. Perhaps this latter point can be settled first. If all three soldiers, British, French and German are bus drivers in civil life and do on the average 100 miles a day, then if they are mobilised with their buses at the outbreak of war, each community loses 100 miles of bus rides per day, and that is the real cost regardless of the pay of the soldier, or whether the money to pay him and keep his bus

in repair is raised by taxation or borrowing. All through the war the community will lose the bus rides and get military service from the men and the vehicles in their place. If the men are all demobilised and get their buses back on the road the day after the armistice, the sacrifice of the community will be ended. Suppose the pay of the British soldier is raised to 4s. a day. This does not affect the real cost in the slightest; he and his bus are still withheld from civilian use. He may get an extra packet of cigarettes a day, but the taxpayer will have 1s. less to spend on cigarettes. All that has changed is the current distribution of cigarettes. Raising the pay of soldiers might actually facilitate the problem of financing the war. If the soldiers are too busy or too remotely placed to spend the money the drain on current resources might be eased compared with that exerted by the civilian population in easy reach of shops.

When Lord Simon was Chancellor he kept on reiterating the argument that borrowing in lieu of taxation was a justifiable method of shifting some of the burden on to the future, and it may be convenient by way of illustration to analyse the issue in terms of his own personal fortune. If Lord Simon can invest £1,000 a year in War Loan he can also be mulcted of that amount in taxation. Whichever procedure is adopted the Government uses the money to acquire resources which will presumably be dissipated in smoke. At the end of the war the effect will be the same; the shells so acquired will have been fired off or will remain to be scrapped. The country will be in no better or worse position to resume peaceful activities whichever alternative the community chooses. The future real income of the nation will be produced by the available labour force, working in conjunction with the available equipment, and that real income will be the same whether the State owes Lord Simon any money or not. If it does owe him any money, then he or his inheritors will draw some of that real income, but other people will draw correspondingly less.

But there is one caveat to enter. The inheritor of Lord Simon may be able to live on that claim without doing any work, and the community will be poorer if he should choose to be idle. One argument for increased taxation is that it reduces the chance of an idle rentier class in the future drawing upon the real national income without contemporaneously contributing to it. In any case the sole argument for borrowing in lieu of taxation is the effect upon incentive during the war. If Lord Simon worked just as hard under the taxation as under the borrowing method—and we do him the credit of believing that he would—then the case for extra taxation is unanswerable. Unfortunately, this cannot be assumed for the population in general, and borrowing has to be resorted to. But do not let us be misled by the misnomer "national savings." Here the fallacy of composition arises. There are individual loans to the State, but there are no "national savings" in the orthodox sense of the term. All the money loaned to the Government is used by it to secure resources for the waging of the war. Something tangible will be left at the end—war factories, thousands of lorries and aeroplanes and piles of shells—but most of the products will have been dissipated in smoke. In the same way the money paid during the war by property owners under the War Damage Act will be dissipated, and there will be no real fund out of which reconstruction can be financed.

This again illustrates the argument about incentive. If property owners can pay one hundred million pounds into a so-called insurance fund during the war, then they could equally have paid one hundred million pounds extra in taxation. In fact, the payment is merely a form of taxation. A new Government after the war might turn round on them and say: "You said you were taxed up to the hilt, but when you thought you were benefiting yourselves, you managed to squeeze out another one hundred million pounds. Well, it has all gone up in the air and we repudiate any obligation." Reconstruction after the war will depend upon the available bricklayers and brick-kilns, and that capacity to reconstruct will be unaffected whether the war damage fund is 200 million pounds or 400 million pounds, and indeed, whether the National Debt is 10,000 million pounds or 20,000 million pounds. Again, the argument of company chairmen that E.P.T. should be reduced to enable industry to build up reserves for the post-war struggle can be disposed of in the same way. Any money set aside by businesses now can only be or should only be loaned to the State, and the State, as has been emphasised, will employ it in such a way that no real fund will be left afterwards. The businesses in question are demanding that they should be put in a position to draw upon the post-war savings of the community, and the only argument for this is the incentive argument. A fine state we should be in if our soldiers, sailors and airmen, to say nothing of employees guarding business premises, were to refuse to fight or serve now unless they were promised a handsome post-war gratuity.

Posterity will be no worse off in real terms under a debt of 20,000 million as compared with one of 10,000 million pounds. Posterity will receive from us an inheritance of equipment—houses, factories, machines. It will suffer from this war because that inheritance will be smaller than it would have been if peace had been maintained. Additions to capital equipment cease during a war because resources are diverted to war production. Much of the equipment which existed at the outbreak of war will deteriorate during the war and some of it has actually been destroyed. Thus, we shall be lucky at the armistice if the real capital of the country is as much as in, say, 1938, but this result will be quite independent of the methods of financing the war. The position will be complicated and worsened because we have been selling abroad some of the real equipment represented by our security holdings. This will reduce the real income of the country by increasing real income in other countries, but again from the point of view of the world as a whole this does not alter the fact that the war is being paid for during its course.

The consolation to be drawn from this is that the figure of 12 million pounds per day and the total of the National Debt have no relevance to the economic capacity of the country at the end of the war. Remember that Germany was financially bankrupt in 1923 and in a position to wage a gigantic war by 1940. What she has done for warlike purposes she could do for peaceful ends, and one of our main tasks is to teach her that. If we could swing over into full-time peace work the day after the armistice the payment for the war would be complete. This will be impossible, not because of the money cost of the war and the debt carried over, but because of the unavoidable dislocation of the transition. But it is not true that we shall be less able to carry the social services. The social services of 1950 will be derived from the product of 1950, and that will depend upon the resources of labour and capital equipment available in 1950. If we secure the full employment of those resources there is every prospect that the product may be larger than in 1931, when in a peaceful world millions of men and women stood idle.

ON THE LESSER CELANDINE MORE OR LESS

THERE was a time when I used to wonder why Wordsworth wrote a poem to the Lesser Celandine, otherwise Pilewoort or Ranunculus Ficaria. When I first identified it—"glabrous, root fasciculate; leaves mostly radical, cordate, stalked, angular, or crenate," and so forth, as it is described in *Flowers of the Field*—I thought it one of the more commonplace of Nature's efforts at country adornment. Not that I had a passion for rare flowers. I shared every child's affection for the common daisy and was early initiated in the Botanic Gardens into the age-old ritual of the daisy-chain. How far this ritual goes back is still an open question among the learned; but there is some support for the belief that it was already in full swing when William Rufus was in his infancy. No child or poet has ever been able to resist the daisy. From Chaucer to Burns and from Burns to Tennyson, the poets have all fallen under its spell.

> Her feet have touched the meadows
> And have left the daisies rosy;

How charming I thought these lines till a botanist explained that what Tennyson meant was that, by treading on the daisies, she had knocked them sideways and so made their crimson underparts more conspicuous. Perhaps the botanist was right; they say that poetry and science are sister and brother; but I prefer to think that a beautiful woman crossing a meadow would have left the daisies rosy to the imagination, even if they had not possessed crimson tips.

The buttercup, again—"an erect perennial covered with soft hairs, the lower leaves intricately divided, nearly all being stalked"—is every child's flower. Lovely in itself, it is also a property in one of the earliest of games—the game in which an elder lets the yellow reflection of the buttercup shine on a four-year-old's chin to see whether it likes butter or not. There is this, too, to be said for buttercups and daisies—that they become associated in the child's mind with long days of sunshine spent in gardens or parks where there is nothing to do but to be happy. They are flowers of the town no less than of the country. For a few months, indeed, they may be said to make the town and the country one place: at least, they did so in the town in which I was born.

For the most part, however, I, a town child, grew up in ignorance of wild flowers. The custom of taking summer holidays, but no spring holidays, left me without any knowledge of the natural world

between February and the end of June except in so far as its outposts reached a suburban garden. The flowers that brought spring to town were the snowdrops and the crocuses, and I doubt whether I had even heard of the Lesser Celandine. There were a few primroses, of course, but not in country masses. Of birds I was equally ignorant. I knew the birds that most commonly came to town—the thrush, the blackbird and the robin—and those that were still singing in the summer holidays, such as the lark, the yellow hammer or the swallow. But I had never, so far as I can remember, heard a willow-wren sing till I heard one singing at Steyning at the age of thirty-nine. If I had heard a hedge-sparrow singing, I should not have known what it was. As for whitethroats, blackcaps and the rest of them, they were as strange to me as birds of paradise.

As a result of this unnatural upbringing, I have long been persuaded that every child should be given a country or seaside holiday, not only in the month of July or August, but in the period between the middle of April and the middle of June—better still, during the period lasting from St. Valentine's Day to St. Martin's Summer. After all, the child is instinctively interested in every growing thing and every living thing. Watch even an eight-months'-old baby following a cat with its eyes and stretching out its hand in the hope of touching it and, perhaps, of seizing its tail, and you will realise at what an early age the love of living, moving things begins. Leave it on its back in a perambulator under a tree in which the budding branches are moving gently in the wind, and it will crow with delight. Sit with it on your knee beside a flower-bed, and it will juggle itself into a position from which it can get a view of the crocuses and violets. By the time it is able to walk, it will stand for at least five minutes in rapt contemplation of a white duck—perhaps for ten minutes if the duck is standing on its head, frog-hunting with tail erect. The whole visible world of animal, flower, hedge and tree is for it a place of wonders. I cannot remember a time when I did not enjoy looking at horses, honeysuckle and heartsease.

These, however, were summer pleasures. Honeysuckle and wild roses were still in flower at the beginning of the holidays; heartsease and bluebells—of the kind called harebells in English—were growing among the Portrush sandhills; and country horses were better to watch than town horses. These things I enjoyed and still enjoy in memory; but I cannot help wishing that I had not remained as ignorant so long of the even better world of spring.

Perhaps, it was largely my own fault that I did so. After all, the country was within a short walk of the house in which I lived as a schoolboy and afterwards as what was euphemistically called a student; and, if I had had any great longing to see birds and flowers, I could have reached them without tiring myself. I liked walking in streets and along the docks in those days, however, and, when I did take a country walk in spring, usually became engaged in talk about people, books, theology, and, later on, what we thought was metaphysics but what I am sure wasn't, instead of paying attention to the birds and the flowers by the way. Consequently, when, as a result of economic necessity, I took ship for England, I was so ignorant that I could not have told the difference between the wild geranium and the rock-rose or between a tree-pipit and a chiff-chaff. All these things were mere names to me, if they were even names.

I might have remained in this state but for an Easter that I spent at Abinger Hammer during the last war while recuperating after an illness. The world looked a very pleasant place to a convalescent, and the birds and flowers were more attractive than I could have imagined them. I was soon able to identify the hedge-sparrow by its song, and what a little charmer it is! Possibly, I even got to know the chiff-chaff. At any rate, my curiosity was aroused, and I began to see an astonishing number of flowers that I did not previously know existed.

Even so, I soon relapsed into indolent ignorance from which I was not awakened till the September of 1917, when I spent a holiday at St. Ives. There, while buying a paper in a bookshop one day, I noticed a number of books about birds and flowers on the shelves. At sight of them I became conscious once more of a childish thirst for knowledge, and day after day bought one of them after another. It was a little late in the year to see nature at her most luxuriant, but there were enough birds and flowers left to keep a beginner busy. At that stage, moreover, one comes even on yarrow with a sense of discovery, and to be able to distinguish between one kind of gull and another is satisfying to the soul. Further still, these books fill the mind of a beginner with dreams—dreams of seeing Arctic bluethroats and wallcreepers and water ousels and pasque-flowers and whatnot.

By the following spring I was an enthusiast, hunting eagerly for the vulgar dog's mercury before it was out and beginning to be able to understand Wordsworth's interest in the Lesser Celandine. There was not a flower in the whole catalogue that I did not wish to see, and month after month took an undiscriminating pleasure in them all, for to identify a flower for the first time gives one a strange liking for the flower.

I have never got to know very much about flowers or birds, but, every spring since then, curiosity has been reborn and, with it, hope. When I hear the first chaffinch singing in the middle of February, I feel that the world has turned a corner and that the promise of summer sun is in the air. When I see the first Lesser Celandine in flower, this tiny sun is also prophetic of more light and of the expansion of life upon earth.

Everything begins to look better already. The pussy-willow is in bud about to break; the tiny groups of leaves of the honeysuckle are rising into the March air like flames; there are primroses by the roadside; there are daffodils and violets in the garden. Pippa's lark is on the wing with a song that has outlasted Alexander's conquests; there are already four blue eggs in the thrush's nest. A goldcrest comes down low in the pools with his colours visible to man the enemy; the very geese on the common are transformed as they parade the green eating grass, the orange webs of their feet made semi-transparent with the sun that shines through them.

It certainly looks a very good world, and it sounds a very good world, and it is conceivable even that it is a very good world. It is a world of growing things, living things and moving things that has survived, and always will survive, the darkness. That is why I do not like to speak ill of the Lesser Celandine which introduces us to it so consistently and so modestly about this time of the year. Y. Y.

SONG

STRANGER, you who hide my love
In the curved cheek of a smile
And sleep with her upon a tongue
Of soft lies which beguile,
Your paradisal ecstasy
Is justified, is justified
By hunger of all beasts beneath
The overhanging cloud;
Who, to snatch quick pleasures run,
Before their momentary sun
Be eclipsed by death.

Lightly, lightly from my sleep
She stole, our vows of dew to break,
Upon a day of melting rain
Another love to take;
Her happy, happy perfidy
Was justified, was justified
Since compulsive needs of sense
Clamour to be satisfied,
And she was never one to miss
Plausible happiness
Of a new experience.

I, who stand beneath a bitter
Blasted tree, with the green life
Of summer joy cut from my side
By that self-selecting knife,
In my exiled misery
Were justified, were justified
If upon two lives I preyed
Or punished with a suicide,
Or murdered pity in my heart
Or two other lives did part
To make the world pay what I paid.

O, but supposing that I climb
Alone to a high room of clouds
Up a ladder of the time
And lie upon a bed alone
And tear a feather from a wing
And listen to the world below
And write round my high paper walls
On anything and everything
Which I know and do not know.

STEPHEN SPENDER

STATESMANSHIP IN CELLULOID

TO-DAY, when there is great need for an honest and representative British information service overseas, the documentary group is again concerned about the character of some of the films being designed for foreign despatch. Our concern is not new; it dates back to the controversy over the British films sent to the New York World's Fair, and even before that. Our authority to discuss and express concern in this problem is the simple fact that long ago the documentary film people realised Britain's need to master and employ the art of national projection. It was of documentary's aims that Sir Stephen Tallents wrote in *The Projection of England* two years before the British Council (which is much involved in this matter) came into being: "She (England) must in the first place project upon the screen of world opinion such a picture of herself as will create a belief in her ability to serve the world under the new order as she has served it under the old." That in a sentence has been the motive behind the several hundred documentary films made this last eleven years, and behind the constant comings-and-goings of the British documentary people to America and the Dominions.

At the present time, two bodies are financed by the Treasury to produce and despatch films overseas: The Ministry of Information and the British Council. The Ministry of Information may not outlive the war; it offers only temporary employment; and films for overseas are only a part of its Films Division's work. The life of the British Council is not so prescribed; it offers a career; and its Film Department is concerned wholly with films for foreign release. Let us look to it first.

In September, 1940, the Secretary of the British Council Film Department stated that £71,800 was being spent that current year on films for abroad—production, distribution and administration. The Director of the Council's Film Department recently said in an interview that the British Council will commission forty films in 1941 "to show the world all that is good about Britain—its unrivalled countryside, its historic places, its centres of trade and commerce, the life of its people—the films must give a truthful and sincere picture of Britain and British life." How closely that echoes the words of Philip Guedalla, Chairman of the Joint Films Committee, when he was challenged by the press about Britain's film exhibit at the New York World's Fair in 1938: "Anything that is a pleasure to look at and advantageous to Britain will be shown." To which Sir David Milne Watson aptly replied in the *Times*: "The question really is, what kind of advantage it is worth while Britain seeking in democratic countries at the present time." In his recent statement, the Director is further quoted as saying: "There are reasons why certain types of 'modern' films, which might be acclaimed rapturously by critical audiences in London, New York and other metropolitan centres, are useless for publicising Britain on a world-wide scale." Does that not also echo Guedalla's quip when he referred to British documentary films as "pictures of glue-factories by night, photographed wrong way up, with crude Russian music"?

Here are some of the subjects of its present films furnished at request by the Director: Epping Forest, Dartmouth Naval College, What England is doing for the Blind, Oxford, Wiltshire Avon, Shipbuilding, Architecture, London Transport, Natural Resources, Bloodstock Breeding. Some of the subjects are good; for example, Architecture. But the treatment required by the British Council did not permit the producers to make reference to the social and human relations of architecture, without which the film was condemned to be a parade of buildings. Why was such emphasis given to the use of brick as a building material? If the film was to publicise British Architecture abroad, what expert advice was taken and from whom? More recently, at the suggestion of the British Film Institute (Seventh Annual Report, 1940), the British Council has undertaken commissioning films for the Export Groups via the Board of Trade, the Export Groups to pay at least 20 per cent. of the cost. One of these, for the Lace Trimmings Group, is described in the press as picturing "the formation of crystals, the frost on the window pane, and the hoar-frost on the spider's web to show where the designs come from." What inspiring propaganda indeed for the British case to the sixty thousand odd Iraqis to whom the British Council claims to show its films. We trust the Export Groups will satisfy themselves that their films will get the kind of circulation that their sponsors are seeking, and that they will be shown to selected and not indiscriminate audiences.

Now let us look at the Ministry of Information. At the outbreak of war its Films Division was put in the charge of Sir Joseph Ball, late Director of Research to the Conservative Party, who called to his aid, among others, three members of the British Council Film Committee. They were the General Manager of the British Film Institute (also late of the Conservative Central Office), the Secretary of the Newsreel Association (also at that time a Governor of the British Film Institute and ex-Secretary of the Films Group of the Federation of British Industries), and the Controller of Publicity of the Post Office, under whose control was the G.P.O. Film Unit. When Ball was replaced by Sir Kenneth Clark, after four months distinguished for inactivity, the first two of the above gentlemen also left, the ex-Secretary of the F.B.I. Films Group shortly resigning his post at the Newsreel Association to become Director of the British Council Film Department, a new post. Not long after the G.P.O. Film Unit's representative at the Ministry of Information was transferred elsewhere, but he still retained his seat on the British Council Film Committee. Thus sitting on the latter were, and presumably still are, three ex-members of the Ministry of Information Films Division, while the Committee's chairman, Philip Guedalla, had also a short time on the staff at Senate House.

Those who know something at first-hand of the problems of film propaganda will agree that there has been a marked improvement in the methods and work of the M.O.I. Films Division in the last few months. Most of the Ministry's films, however, appear destined for home consumption, and not specifically designed for foreign audiences as are the British Council films, but if its films are carrying a British message to the world, we need to know something of its text. The Ministry preserves the silence of obscurity.

The important question that now arises is, How far does the film work of the British Council duplicate the work of the Ministry of Information? What relations exist, if any, between the two bodies? We know from the Films Report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure that a gentleman's agreement exists whereby the Ministry makes "political" films and the British Council "cultural" films. But into which class does the British Council film about Hitler being a bastard fall, and where do we place the Ministry's films about schools, public health and agriculture? We know also that a representative of the Films Division sits on the British Council Film Committee. We recall with some apprehension, however, that the Select Committee's Report (published last August) showed some partiality towards the work of the British Council. At the same time we must remember that the Report was based on investigations made up to June last year and was thus mainly concerned with the legacy of personnel who had either resigned or been transferred elsewhere, some of whom, as has been pointed out above, were, and still are, members of the British Council Film Committee.

Of the two bodies sending British films overseas, therefore, one appears to represent an expression of British life that is by no means related to popular feeling and in some opinions can do definite harm to the British democratic cause, while the other is singularly silent about the message contained in its films if we except the now out-of-date "Britain-can-take-it" theme. But sooner or later both these two bodies will be forced to face the fact that the Dominions and Colonies, as well as the neutrals, are going to ask whether Britain's wholehearted belief in the democratic cause for the future is honest or not. The neutrals and the Empire peoples are of necessity concerned with what kind of a world Britain will propose if she wins this war, and what her attitude will be towards a new deal for the peoples of all nations. Far from supplying an answer to this most vital of all questions, the British Council films might even be taken by neutrals as suggesting a return to the old order, which the neutrals and the Empire peoples know can never be. If and when it is given, Britain's answer to the world must contain all the reasons for our present endurance, sacrifice and effort. No longer can we rely on selling the war in the image of one little island off the coast of Europe fighting for its life; nor can we, if we value our future freedom, propagandise for a return to the pre-Hitler world. We have got to blazon across the seas a positive philosophy for the future, setting out the alignment of Britain's youth to the rest of the world. This is the answer which should keep our foreign information services humming by day and night. And it is an answer that cannot be sealed in the privacy of the council chamber, the sanctuary of the broadcasting closet or the sound proofery of the film studio because it concerns the very existence of the British people themselves.

PAUL ROTHA

THE MOVIES

"Angels Over Broadway," at the Regal.
"Circonstances Atténuantes," at Studio One.
"Christmas in July," at the Plaza.

At the opposite pole to the film that spans continents there is the rock-pool film, the film restricted to a single situation, a few hours, half-a-dozen characters washed up by the tide. Hollywood excels in both; but for ten *Covered Waggons* or *All Quiets* there is one *Petrified Forest*. To those who welcome the survival of a *cinéma intime* in which discrimination triumphs and ideas are not settled by ballot vote, I recommend *Angels Over Broadway*. This film has been produced, written and directed by one man, Ben Hecht; and as a result it has an individuality and style of its own. Take a rainy evening in New York, a restaurant of modernist design, with its gaiety and boredom, its clientèle of the wealthy and famous and their hangers-on; set the swing doors moving and admit a disconsolate little man (John Qualen) who intends to commit suicide before morning. He is marked down at once by watching eyes; by the cigarette-girl who has been overtipped, by a hard-up crook with dreams of hooking a millionaire, a ballet-dancer protectively sympathetic, a well-known dramatist, very drunk, who discovers the stranger's secret from a "last letter" in the overcoat handed to him by mistake in the cloak-room. Three thousand dollars—the amount stolen from a business partner—will be enough to save the would-be suicide from jumping into the river. The dramatist (Thomas Mitchell) takes charge and plans a different ending in which, with the help of the crook (Douglas Fairbanks), the money will be won from a shady gambling club. The rest of the night is spent in putting this exciting plan into practice, and when the dawn comes, our suicide has his money, the crook has a plastered face but has kissed the ballet girl, the famous dramatist has found his way home to the only place where he can write instead of getting drunk. Chance, and not Fate, is the overruling force of this unpretentious drama. But for a policeman on his rounds the little man would have jumped straight into the river; but for the rain he would never have turned aside into a restaurant more expensive than he was used to; and from time to time, like a discreet chorus, the rain pours down windows or springs up like gas-jets from pavements and the roofs of cars. By a delightful stroke of chance, the dramatist having saved a life passes out in a drunken stupor and wakes in a strange room with the memory only of having had a good idea for a plot which he has forgotten. *Angels Over Broadway* works out a mood mingling the seamy and the sardonic, with gusts of real invention; all of the characters are given a turn to reveal themselves, and if they take the opportunity to pronounce on Life, too, it is done usually with point. *Angels Over Broadway* combines a tenseness of atmosphere from the silent days with a sardonic wit peculiar to Ben Hecht. It is the sort of film which a talented author, living in Hollywood, is allowed to produce every ten years or so. Don't, therefore, put off seeing *Angels Over Broadway*, with the thought that you will be seeing other Hecht films in the future.

Circonstances Atténuantes also exploits a small cross-section of society in terms of crooks and their victims. A magistrate on holiday with his wife puts up for the night at a squalid café in a Paris suburb, and finds himself leading a delightful gang of pickpockets and burglars. They are humbler, more elegant and more farcical than Mr. Hecht's sinister New Yorkers. The magistrate goes into a shop, from which they are stealing a motor bicycle outside, and pays the shop-keeper while pretending to cover their retreat. In the end he directs a burglary of his own house from which the more hideous ornaments are carted away. When the game is up and the holiday ends the magistrate has such a grip over his new friends that they all go out and look for jobs. This is a gay film: not the last, one hopes, to be salvaged from the France of a year ago.

Christmas in July ought really to have been made by René Clair (is he still in Hollywood?). As it is, the story of an office clerk who has his leg pulled and imagines he has won a slogan competition, and then really wins it, sways a little between farce and sobs. No film-producer can afford to be really lighthearted over money. However, *Christmas in July* is entertaining and quite unaffected by the drive of American propaganda.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"New Faces" at the Apollo

This, the most varied and consistent of last year's intimate revues, returns to London with a second performance following its matinée. If we cannot any longer precede a revue with a suitable dinner, 5.30 is at least a more agreeably frivolous hour than the heavy afternoon. The advertisements promise us new material as well as the old favourites, but the innovations are not altogether happy; in particular the war has not yet, it seems, settled into a shape which provides satisfactory material for satire. But we should find it worth revisiting the revue, if for nothing else, to remind ourselves of Miss Betty Ann Davies in "Thank you for the party Mr. Pollinger," Miss Zoe Gail as a Windmill Angel exiled from Paradise, Mr. Hawtrey as a Blonde Spy, and Mr. Bill Frazer *passim*. Miss Judy Campbell now has a chance of showing that she is something more than an expensive model, exquisitely photogenic: she displays a turn for sulky comedy as a Bali Sugar. Mr. Micklewood is quite capable, in the enforced absence of most of the males, of carrying the main burden of singing and dancing. An engaging show, only slightly shop-soiled.

Firemen Artists at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Southampton Row

Turner was born a hundred and thirty years too soon. Instead of imagining conflagrations in the saloons of Petworth, he should be sating his appetite for arson in the Auxiliary Fire Service. The firemen artists now exhibiting at the Central School lack his extraordinary power of translating a blaze into paint, and they are not so bold in painting as they are in fire-fighting. But they have succeeded in using their eyes in the midst of their activities, and the exhibition provides a number of fascinating accounts of things seen. Mr. Paul Dessau in his "Burning gas-main" succeeds in making a picture stand on its own legs and so does Mr. Rudolf Haybrook in "Rescuing a trapped comrade from a bombed fire station." Other specially successful works are Mr. Leonard Rosoman's "Cheapside," Miss Prunella Pott's "Saving Stock at the Caledonian Market," Mr. J. Mulhern's "High Explosive" and Mr. F. T. W. Cook's "Fire in Birmingham." But the chief value of the exhibition is naturally documentary, and both the painters and the organisers deserve our warm gratitude for showing us such an assembly of apocalyptic spectacles.

Contemporary Artists at the Leger Gallery

The paucity at present of exhibitions is hard upon the public as well as the painters, and one is thankful to every gallery that keeps its walls covered. The show at the Leger Gallery contains two very fine oil-paintings by Frances Hodgkins: "On the Essex Farm" is indeed one her most felicitous works. Two ruined cottages provide John Piper with shapes to adorn with his increasingly scrumptious paint. (The analogy between painting and cooking is inescapable when one looks at his pictures.) He combines a rare gift for straightforward architectural draughtsmanship with a natural decorative gift that one would like to see applied to a whole room. Mr. Ivon Hitchens is another of our best decorators, and his "Ornamental Garden" is a beautiful work. A little snow-scene by Kenneth Rowntree catches one's fancy, and one of Sickert's Victorian transcriptions possesses quality as well as gaiety. Messrs. Wyndham Lewis, Pasmore, Ravilious, Devas and Stanley Spencer also contribute.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, March 22nd—
- Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, Queen's Hall, 2.30.
- First of twelve lectures: "The Principles of Statistics," by Paul Dienes, followed by a demonstration on "Statistical Method in Practice," by M. G. Kendall, Birkbeck College, 4.
- C. Lestor: "The Balkan Turmoil," Conway Hall, 4. Free.

SUNDAY, March 23rd—
- Prof. J. C. Flugel: "The Moral Paradox of Peace and War," Conway Hall, 11.
- K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy-Marx," 17 Manchester Street, W.1, 11.
- International Youth Rally, at 10.30 and 2.30, Youth House, 250 Camden Road, N.W.1.

MONDAY, March 24th—
- Front Line Exhibition, cartoons and drawings by Gabriel, Hob-Nob, Chen, etc. Also lunch-hour concerts, lectures, etc. 6½ Suffolk Street, S.W.1. Daily 10–5, Thurs. 10–7, till April 9th.
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch, M. Perhelsen: "The State of Denmark," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2, 1.

TUESDAY, March 25th—
- Eugenics Society Lunch, Kenneth Lindsay: "New Slants on British Education," Pinoli's, Wardour Street, 1. Tickets 3s.
- The Lady Allen of Hurtwood: "Emergency Nursery Centres in Reception Areas," Housing Centre, 1.
- Mass Meeting in Celebration of Greek Independence Day. Queen's Hall, 3.
- Dr. William Cohn: "Chinese Art in the Light of Comparative Art Study," Warburg Institute, 3.30. And on April 1st.

WEDNESDAY, March 26th—
- Fabian Women's Group Lunch, Mary Sutherland will speak on the work of the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations. 12 Gt. Newport St., 1.

THURSDAY, March 27th—
- Violin Recital by Peter Bornstein, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 6.

Correspondence

COMRADES

SIR,—I have been in the habit of writing weekly articles upon the British political scene to a friend of mine in America. These articles may or may not find their way into an American paper.

During the week-end following the shutting down of the *Daily Worker* and *The Week*, I quoted in the article a long extract from THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and also another extract from the *Tribune* in order to show how two reputable weeklies regarded the measure. The main emphasis was not that the *Worker had* been shut down but rather *how* it had been shut down.

Now of course there is a postal censorship to the U.S.A. One would think that the return of material thought to be "inadequate" for our fellow democratic state would be sufficient, and so I was mildly surprised to receive a visit from the police this week.

The officer was "kindly." I was closely questioned about my past and present activities . . .

date of marriage . . . date of birth . . . schools attended . . . all the usual stuff. And I was of course questioned as to whether I was a member of the Communist Party. I have never been a member of the Communist Party, and to the best of my ability I tried to explain how one could be irritated by the "line" of the *Worker* and yet feel indignant at the way in which the *Worker* had been shut down. This was subtle . . . and the inspector couldn't see it. However, I thought that I might help him out by the use of concrete matter. It was a great coincidence that the agenda of the local Labour Party's next meeting had just reached me, the first item being . . . "That this party regrets the suppression of the *Daily Worker*."

Now this did puzzle the poor fellow. He read the whole agenda with the greatest perplexity . . . then a kind of understanding seemed to break . . . pointing slowly to the form of address (Dear Comrade) he said slowly, "Now I speak in ignorance . . . but isn't that COMMUNIST?"

I do wish that Mr. Bevin had been there.

Yes, that was the light relief to a rather deplorable and slightly disgusting first-hand experience of the terrible ramifications of wartime police law.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

37 Gower Street, W.C.1. HOWARD FOX

E.P.T.

SIR,—Your Industrial Correspondent in his "Economic Notes," March 8th, says, "It is a curious situation that a Labour Member of Parliament should be moving to lower the rate of Excess Profits Tax." If it is "a curious situation" to find one of the business men of the Labour Party, and there are many, applying his knowledge and experience to see both sides of a difficult problem, let us hope that it will be a good example that will be copied by Conservative Members when problems affecting Labour are before the House. For there is a Coalition Government, hence a Coalition Opposition.

Let us remember that there is no greater asset to an unworthy system than a bigoted opponent. Your correspondent agrees with my main reasons in desiring an alteration of the E.P.T. Ethically 100 per cent. E.P.T. is correct, but it is holding up our war effort. If I am to choose between a correct principle and getting the goods to our men who are sacrificing everything for our safety, then I am willing to compromise. Men ought to put their very best into the war effort without any consideration of personal profit—but they do not. The men who take the greatest risk should have the greatest reward—but they do not. We are all compromising that is why we have a National Government. Nobody knows better than your correspondent to what extent the Conservatives (still the majority party) have accepted Socialist principles to solve the problems of the war, and if there is to be a spirit of give and take, it must work both ways.

I am asked why I do not propose that the "State should take over the war industries outright and thus for the time being get rid of profits altogether? That would be an infinitely better solution of the main problem . . has nothing of this occurred to Mr. Edwards or does he, Labour Member though he is, believe that private capitalism is the best instrument for carrying on war production?" Of course it had occurred to me, and I am a sound Socialist *working within a capitalist State at war*. I think something of this may also have occurred to Mr. Atlee, Mr. Bevin, Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Dalton who are in a far better position to *give effect* to your correspondent's proposals than I am as a back-bencher—but they do not.

The simple answer is given in the words of your financial correspondent "Urbanus" on March 1st—"Nationalisation is, of course, the ultimate end . . . I doubt whether the Government could introduce such a far-reaching scheme. . . . involving complicated questions of compensation to stockholders, in the middle of a war."

But there is something to be said for a reduction on its merits apart from expediency. Every £100 shown on a profit and loss account is not available for cash distribution, but every £100 assessed for tax *must* be paid in cash. Under Socialist control, businesses would need liquid assets and reserves. A business to-day needs more liquid assets as its turnover increases and it just is not practicable to take 100 per cent. of the excess profits.

But let us look at the effect of my proposal. If 15 per cent. is left in the business, it will be assessed for Income Tax so it will be barely 8 per cent. and it would be difficult for us to argue that workers' earnings have not increased in the same proportion.

We who favour the proposal will insist that it be not used for dividends. In fact I would re-impose the limitation of dividends. But there are some other proposals I think should be put forward at the same time. I would collect at the end of the war all capital increments. I would insist on a Capital Tax or Levy to pay for the war. It is a capital charge and it is ridiculous to talk about paying for it—even partially—out of income. I would abolish the law of inheritance or radically change it. Capital profits of every sort should be taxed.

Perhaps your Industrial Correspondent will consider carefully the full arguments. If we succeed in getting a debate on the matter, I do not think he will disagree. ALFRED EDWARDS, M.P.

House of Commons, S.W. for Middlesbrough East.

THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

SIR,—There has been considerable correspondence about democracy in the Army, and the role of the Education Officer. Here is an account of what actually happened in one Unit.

Debates have been taking place for some weeks under the auspices of the Education Officer (a 2nd Lieut.). The first time, the Captain was in the chair; five minutes before the debate he told his audience the subject: Should Civil Defence Workers be Released from the Army?—and detailed speakers for both sides. At the end of the debate he told his audience which side had won. But after that debates took a more usual form and ended with voting; they also became more political. Munich was condemned; War Aims, it was decided overwhelmingly, should be declared.

The subject of the next debate was: What are the Three Most Essential Post-war Reforms? But here the Adjutant stepped in. The word "reform" must be deleted from Battery orders. Further, the Debating Society must come under Regimental control (himself), rather than Battery control (the Education Officer). After some protests from the Major, it was decided after all that this debate could not well be cancelled on what were obviously political grounds, so it went forward and was a success. The Debating Society was then asked to put forward forty subjects for debate. Unfortunately all the subjects were political! These appeared to be the only subjects which really interested the Unit.

The Education Officer chose one, and it seems inherently probable that he chose a mild one; he informed the Adjutant, who proceeded to ban all political subjects. Obediently the Education Officer thought up an innocuous one: Should professional sport be continued in time of war? The attendance at this debate dropped from about fifty to exactly one.

So what? NAOMI MITCHISON

Carradale House,
Carradale, Campbeltown, Argyll.

NEGRIN AND SPAIN

SIR,—May I correct a factual mistake of Mr. Kingsley Martin? He says in his article in your last issue: "One thing that convinces me of Señor Negrin's greatness is that since the victory of Franco he has not, I believe, written a word to justify himself or to incriminate the generals who threw him over and made peace with the enemy."

As far as I know Señor Negrin has written more than one word to justify himself—at least about 4,000 words. It is his correspondence with Señor Prieto, who was minister under Señor Negrin's Government. The letters of Señor Negrin and the replies of Señor Prieto were written in 1939, after the victory of Franco, and were published in Paris in the same year, under the title of *Epistolario. Prieto y Negrin*. If Mr. Kingsley Martin would like to read this revealing epistolary I have a copy at his disposal. It is a living picture of the two men, both as a mutual portraying and as self-portraits.

But Señor Negrin is a fortunate man who did not need to make the effort of vindicating himself even in that short though pungent apology. Hundreds of thousands of words have been written on his behalf in many languages and countries, books, pamphlets and articles—most by Communists or Communist sympathisers. And he has not, I believe, written a word to rebuke or discourage his panegyrists. He may be the great man Mr. Kingsley Martin is convinced he is, but his greatness will have to be sought somewhere else than in his dumbness. He is neither a silent man nor a man about whom his pluri-lingual friends keep silence—at least with his tacit consent.

113 Arthur Court, Queensway, W.2. LUIS ARAQUISTAIN

[We are glad to know of this correspondence and grateful to Señor Araquistáin for his offer to let us see a copy. Whether the existence of this publication modifies our estimate depends on its contents. But it is scarcely likely to modify Mr. Kingsley Martin's point—that Señor Negrin has been unusually and wisely reticent in exile. —ED., *N.S. & N.*]

FREEDOM AT CAMBRIDGE

SIR,—The interesting figures reported in the letter officially addressed to you by Mr. Dunkerley, President of the C.U. Undergraduate Council, would be still more interesting if Mr. Dunkerley would add some words of explanation. I write to ask that he will be good enough to do this.

Over 50 per cent. of the "undergraduate members of the University," Mr. Dunkerley says, recorded their opinions of the proposals of the Proctorial Syndicate. "604 supported and 878 opposed the recommendation that the Proctors should have the power to ban public meetings."

What precisely does Mr. Dunkerley mean by "undergraduate members of the University"? Am I right in supposing that he is using these words in strict accuracy so as to include only members of the men's Colleges? Or am I right in supposing that he is including members of the women's Colleges who are not in fact "undergraduate members of the University," though some of us some years ago thought that they ought to be? If Mr. Dunkerley has included women students in his calculations, how many of the 604 and of the 878 were men, and how many were women? The point is of some importance since, of course, the Proctors have no jurisdiction over women students. Women students are entitled, as other people are entitled, to their opinions of the Proctorial recommendations, and your readers like to know what those opinions are; but those opinions are in a different category from the opinions of undergraduate members of the University who are subject to proctorial jurisdiction. Let us then be clear about these figures: do they cover two categories or one?

The quite fantastic claim of the Undergraduate Council to have affiliated to itself "practically every undergraduate society" makes one cautious reader of your paper anxious to know more about the figures which it puts forward. If the atmosphere of free discussion is valuable, as I think it is, it is difficult to believe that there can be any objection to providing the information for which I ask.

Jesus College, Cambridge. BERNARD MANNING

THE FITNESS OF THE LABOUR PARTY

SIR,—So many of your readers have worked for the Labour movement that I hope you will allow us to discuss its future. We are not reassured by Mr. Middleton's comparison with the last war. Anyhow, the Labour Party of to-day is more in the position of the Liberal Party in 1916, while Mr. Pritt and his followers might claim to represent the group led by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. For the sake both of England and the Labour movement I sincerely hope that history will *not* repeat itself.

The war has taken many of us into a mixed company little interested in politics. The Army is a good cross-section of English life, but it hardly suggests that the prospects of the Labour Party are as good as they seem from Transport House. Lookers-on sometimes see most of a game, and I should like to suggest, as a fairly old member of the Party, some of the factors which distress me.

1. Our leaders—with the possible exception of Mr. Bevin and Mr. Morrison—are losing their identity and becoming *gleichgeschaltet* with the governing class. In my early campaigning days Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Snowden, whatever we may have thought about them afterwards, did not seem a bit like Mr. Baldwin or Lord Birkenhead. Will young men stump the country extolling Attlee, Greenwood, Alexander and Dalton as the vanguard of progress against the reactionary Churchill, Eden, Sinclair, and Butler?

2. As with the Liberal Party in the 'twenties, age is becoming a serious problem. The Labour Party is definitely older than the Conservatives. Most of our M.P.s are approaching or have reached the term of sixty-five years, after which the older Universities have decided that even a professor is

past his work. Our local parties consist chiefly of elderly worthies, stalwarts of a past generation, no longer capable of adapting their ideas to the tough and complicated world of to-day. They like to return to Parliament men who are "safe," provincial in outlook, mouthing the old formulas, men whom they can understand.

3. Much of our propaganda is based on ideas which are no longer new, and which have acquired unhappy associations. The dictators in Germany, Italy and Russia all talk about the decay of capitalism, about Socialism and new orders. By the end of the war we shall ourselves have introduced so much State control that its defenders may well seem like reactionaries rather than innovators.

4. The public know the names of very few of the political "Left." Too often the names they remember are those of Jews or extreme pacifists. Both classes tend to an intellectual arrogance which estranges their friends and infuriates their opponents. Certain journalists, like Dean Inge and Mr. Herbert, whose task it has been to comfort the comfortable classes, have spread the idea of a subversive Left wing, exotic in origin and continually urging England to fight wars in which they take little part. They have been helped by Catholics and by "near Fascists," and this idea is very widely held.

5. Labour leaders take singularly little trouble to give a lead on subjects which are worrying their followers, especially Government measures for which they are partly responsible and which infringe freedom of opinion. Nor does it seem that our leaders are training and encouraging younger men to take their place.

6. The Left is, I believe, showing too much enthusiasm for "war aims." All Europeans in occupied countries are longing to get back to their own national way of life. This desire must be satisfied before any interest will be taken in international reconstruction. The Left has, on the whole, been correct in its diagnosis of foreign affairs, certainly far more correct than the Right. However liverish the NEW STATESMAN may have been during the last five years, it has been far better informed and accurate than the Conservative Press, or Mr. Herbert's gouty and not too comic weekly. The Left has only gone wrong when it has listened to the theorists and the League of Nations enthusiasts.

PIONEER

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

SIR,—I share your regret but not your surprise that the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party should be proposing to hold its Annual Conference without permitting any resolutions from affiliated bodies.

Surely the one way to give the mass of the Movement in the country an opportunity to express its views, to initiate policy, and to exercise its democratic control over and give vitality to the movement of which it is the real basis is this method of bringing forward resolutions. To preserve its full operation is surely ten times as important now as ever before. Are the rank and file not to express their views on industrial conscription, on the proposal that national unity, so-called, should be kept on for three years after the war, on the defence of the standard of living, and on many other vital issues of the day?

The decision amounts to a sentence of death on those Divisional Labour Parties who have not already anticipated the sentence, and I begin to sympathise with the Right Wing journalist who said to me the other day: "I wish you would not keep talking in initials. What *is* this N.E.C.? Is it the Expulsion Committee or the Execution Committee?"

What are Transport House afraid of? They always used to boast they could "manage" any conference. I suppose they fear that healthy discussion will be represented as a breach in national unity. What sort of national unity is it that is so fragile that the price of its apparent maintenance is to be a black-out on discussion? And it is surely idle to suggest that discussion on reports drawn up at the centre is a substitute for proper discussion of resolutions. Even if the reports happen to mention matters which would have been brought forward in resolutions, the chair may well not call on speakers who would have been entitled to speak on resolutions.

The great bulk of rank and file of Labour people in the country are, it must be remembered, thinking anxiously about their future. They are wondering whether the Labour Party will resume its function of fighting for what they want, or whether it will have to make way for some other movement that will. Why have so many people turned to the People's Convention Movement? It is not because they have not been infinitely loyal to the Labour Party for years; it is because their loyalty has been slowly destroyed by failure after failure.

If the Labour Party Executive holds to this course, may I suggest to it a slogan for the Conference: "*Your* 'No Resolutions' will bring *Us* victory"?

D. N. PRITT.

2 Pump Court,
Temple, E.C.4.

BLACK RECORD

SIR,—This assault, from both extremes of Right and Left, on Sir Robert Vansittart's *Black Record* seems to me as grotesque a waste of effort as I ever knew, with so many real scandals calling for notice (and receiving very little). I did not find the book the ungenerous thing reviewers had led me to expect. And I take its main thesis to be based on unfortunate truths: that not once, but repeatedly, the Germans have inflicted in war far worse misery than they suffered themselves and therefore still over-assess the proportion of "glory" to wretchedness: that they are more easily than other nations welded into a practical unanimity which no doubt might some day prove pleasant for the rest of us but has not yet done so: and that they have been very sorry for themselves (over Versailles and "encirclement" and other grievances) but do not readily see the case of any other nation. As for Sir Robert, he fought a lonely battle when our rulers were all for appeasement, and I suggest that he earned the right to speak out now. Nor do I believe that the use of his book by Nazi propaganda will make a ha'porth of difference to the German will to beat us down. That will is immensely strong and can hardly be strengthened.

EDWARD THOMPSON

Oxford.

ADULT EDUCATION

SIR,—Mr. Joad's last letter is an illustration of a method of controversy which he would do well to reflect about. Statements like "picking tutors' pockets" and "blackmailed by poverty" have little relationship to the facts. In the first place a tutor of a three-session tutorial class is engaged to take a class for one session only. When the session of 24 meetings ends the contract is ended. The continuance of a class into its second or third years depends upon the students. If a sufficient number are willing or able to continue into the second year, then the tutor is engaged for another session. If there is not a sufficient number the University Tutorial Classes Committee cannot renew the contract. In most cases tutorial classes are organised by the W.E.A. voluntary workers and no effort is spared by them and by the University Committee's officers to ensure that the students will continue into the second or third years. This problem is not peculiar to wartime, but war conditions in the London District have made it more difficult to deal with.

If, however, the number of original students is insufficient to justify continuance into the second or third years the group is not necessarily closed down. Attempts are made by voluntary workers to get new students and if these are successful a class of another type, i.e. University sessional class, may be approved. But the Board of Education maximum grant for this type is lower than for a tutorial class and consequently the University is not able to offer the same fee to the tutor.

Mr. Joad attempts to make a point relative to tutors "who are dependent for their livelihood on the fees received from Adult Education classes." Most of us in this movement have informed part-time tutors that they should not depend upon classes for their main source of livelihood and in fact very few do in this district.

In the particular instance that I daresay Mr. Joad has in mind had no students been able or willing to continue into a second year, there would have been no class and Mr. Joad would have had no case. The fact that there were a few who could be amalgamated with a new group enabled a new class to be started, but under the conditions it obviously could not be a three-sessional tutorial class.

In my previous letter I stated that there was machinery available where tutors' grievances, if they had any, could be dealt with. Mr. Joad is a tutorial class tutor and I suggest he would be better employed in bringing his grievances before the organisation of tutors rather than by ventilating them in the press.

W. LOWTH,
Secretary.

W.E.A., London District,
28 Woburn Square,
W.C.1.

HUMANE TRAPPING

SIR,—It is difficult to understand why the Government has been induced to remove the ban on setting gin traps in the open. These traps were never intended to be used in this way—though, of course, it makes the work slightly easier for the trappers.

In the past grazing cattle have been caught by their lips, and even by their tongues which have had to be amputated; and now the ban has been removed dogs and other domestic animals are being caught by this fiendish device and tortured. There are at least ten other humane ways of killing down rabbits mentioned in my illustrated leaflet which also includes humane methods of trapping rats and moles. A copy will be sent to any reader on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

C. VAN DER BYL (Major)
Founder of the Humane Trapping Campaign

Wappenham,
Towcester,
Northants.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

JUDGED by their portraits, what a large number of the Victorian writers seem not to be writers at all, but creatures from the Green Room and the stage! There are the haggard, Irving-like grimaces of Dickens, the dank, baleful ringlets, so Siddonish, of George Eliot and Elizabeth Barrett. Tennyson glowers like the bearded villain from the Lyceum. They were, of course, a histrionic generation and in a way the habit embellishes them. But not all. Every prejudice we feel about Thackeray, for example, is confirmed by his disastrous portraits. Did ever a snob look more like a footman, was ever a man of the world more easily mistaken—as so often occurs to men of the world—for one of the servants? Take the very literary steel spectacles from his nose in Samuel Lawrence's portrait, and what is more damning than that episcopal look of his, as if he were at once a bishop, bland and patronising, at a ducal christening, and Mr. Yellowplush himself announcing in the long soirée of Victorian letters, that the carriage has arrived? What a role to have chosen—to be the great flunkey of God and Mammon, the whited expert on the whited sepulchres.

There is, of course, more in the portrait than that. Bishops and footmen have not that sensibility; the eyes have not the professional vacant stare; and the chin, which Thackeray raises so high, seems to be raised defensively rather than with arrogance. Like an actor's, it suggests the pride of a personal style. People who knew Thackeray well said that they had never got to the bottom of him, and one can well believe it. One is held off. And yet one cannot escape him. Other novelists conceal themselves, but the figure of Thackeray is pushed forward in advance of his characters. We simply have to make up our mind about him personally because in all those novels "without a hero" he is the hero himself, the compère of his own show. We are obliged to know the flow of his egoism better than we shall know the Osbornes and the Sedleys or any of his characters.

Re-reading *Vanity Fair* again, one realises what a brilliant innovation this was in the English novel. *Vanity Fair* is, as the traditional usually turns out to be, a new experiment. Before everything, Thackeray was a versatile journalist, the author of clever sketches and short pieces which are still sharp and pungent in their satire after three generations. Egoistical but detached, he is alive to the current of life, the stream on which the curious fragments called human beings are borne. He observes. He does not appear to have a sustained imaginative power which can create a character like one of Balzac's larger than life, though his interests resemble Balzac's. (He has more in common with Balzac than with Dickens.) Thackeray is like the modern novelists who derive from James and Proust, in his power of dissecting (and of desiccating!) character, in the refusal to inflate it. For a Victorian, we feel this had to be a fatal originality. The long novel, the great theme, the crowded canvas, were essential. Thackeray can see this, yet he must realise that his genius is for the fragmentary. And so he disguises his inability to create the proper paraphernalia of fiction, by introducing himself as the *raconteur*, who, having got you to listen, can distract, delude and beguile you with an atmosphere—an atmosphere which lifts like a haze from time to time upon one of those fragments of real talk, action and character which are true as life itself. A voice talks on, going forward, winding backward, playing with scene and time. We see that this is not merely a new kind of narrative, but that it catches the illusion of living as none of his contemporaries ever did. They were interested in the outsize thing called Life.

Another innovation—and Thackeray seems always to be innovating—is his view of character. There are no fixed characters in *Vanity Fair*. Amelia, Becky, that grim wreck Miss Crawley, the egotistical young soldier, George Osborne, old Sedley, the virtuous bankrupt, and Jos, his son, the Regency dandy and glutton—they are not defined once and for all. They change with the story, they change in time, their view of one another changes. Thackeray makes them fluid and unexpected. It is a wicked concession to melodrama and humbug that Becky apparently murders Jos Sedley at the end. And yet, what is more perfect than the career of this buffoon? Comically drunk at Vauxhall at the beginning, then respectably in flight from his errors, turning up dressed for the part in Brussels before Waterloo. Then panic again. Clothes, "dashed fine gals and ices" are the ruling passions of this windy, fat and simple hypochrondriac. Food-poisoning in low company is the fitting end, even if it is incredible that Becky had been studying Jos Sedley's liver all these years in order to commit the crime. Becky and Rawdon are greater examples of Thackeray's eye for the unexpected in character. It is a pity that Thackeray had to preach to us about Becky for, whether taking her side or not, he was capable of letting her live for herself. The stay at Crawley, when she is received into the family and listens to Lady Southdown's homilies, winds the wool and sings Haydn in the evenings, is made perfect by Becky's pleasure in it. It is a brief pleasure, for Becky is no fool. "I could be good," she reflects, "if I had £5,000 a year." Then again there is Rawdon, the brainless Guardsman, the "Mayfair playboy" with "no harm" in him. His famous bequest of his horse to Becky as he goes off to battle, is the crown of stumbling humanity upon his character. The virtue of such incidents is not merely their comedy; it is their reality. With every line in these portraits—and, I say, in the portraits not in the disquisitions Thackeray wrote under them—there is an extension of reality, the excitement of the detective who goes from clue to clue. And still the honeymoon at Brighton with Becky being witty about the moon while her husband sharps at cards in the room behind her, and the Brussels chapters, stand out as a culminating height in English comic writing. The bullet in Geo. Osborne's heart is not so good; but the rest—well, last summer and last autumn we saw the whole Thackerean scene enacted again.

Thackeray and Balzac: they are like the opposite sides of the same penny. Here is young George Osborne speaking to Amelia:

> "Ours is a ready money society. We live among bankers and city big-wigs, and be hanged to them, and every man as he talks to you jingles his guineas in his pocket."

Money in Balzac is as dynamic as a passion; in Thackeray it is less massive but it is ubiquitous. True, it is reduced in his philosophy to the common level of vanity, another factor which the moralist washes down with another glass of vintage sadness; but in the narrative Thackeray understands money and its place in the contemporary situation. Waterloo must have looked romantic in 1840, yet Thackeray also knew who won that battle. It is not an accident that Osborne and Sedley are Stock Exchange speculators, the newest representatives of middle-class finance. And in the cut-throat stage, too. He knows the anxiety of the aristocracy to cut them, make them pay; and the anxiety of speculators to get their sons and daughters into the class above them. Thackeray's picture of the Regency aristocracy is a caricature, as we know from the memoirs of the time; it is a middle-class view which understands the aristocrats only when, like Lady Southdown, they catch the middle-class infection. But how proper is the distinction he makes between the attitude of the various members of the Crawley family to Miss Crawley's fortune, and the attitude of old Osborne to *his* fortune. The thought of Miss Crawley—the greatest character in the book to my mind—makes one wonder if Thackeray did always go wrong about aristocrats. (I take it she was one? An old-fashioned revolutionary aristocrat, already an anachronism before Waterloo.) She is the one character who understands Becky, and it is the older, shrewder feeling of her generation for money which sharpens Miss Crawley's eyes. One seems to see wills becoming deeds, deeds becoming notes, notes dissolving into coins and passing from above from hand to hand until they reach the dress-wiping palms of the servants, in nearly every page of this novel. It was a perception which was no doubt heightened in Thackeray by the taboo on sex; so that socially the background is perfect, where the individuals are castrated.

One does not say that the inability to write about love as a sexual passion is fatal to a novelist; but in Thackeray the people do become, as he says, "Puppets." They are small to the eye, figures seen through the wrong end of a telescope. As egotists, they are made mean by their sexlessness; for there is a generosity about sexual egotism. We recall the terrible crime of Becky, even in her schooldays: "she was old in life and experience." After the hush caused by that remark, we do not to-day rise, as we were intended to do, to nobler heights; on the contrary, we sink to that plane where the "quid" dominates its unmentionable partnership with the "pro quo."

But the pleasure of Thackeray is the sense of Style, the intimacy of an educated mind. It is absurd to condemn the educated for being humbugs: they are merely more skilful humbugs. Since when have the educated been observed to "know better," to be any more than a more self-conscious product of their times? Remove the vices of a novelist and his virtues vanish too. To us, and especially since the two wars, Thackeray is the great sedentary novelist, a moralist to whom adventure and physical action are alien; and that cuts him off. He is cut off by his melancholy—a peacetime luxury: our emotion is sharp, dramatic and tragic. But in *Vanity Fair*, in those hundreds of fragmentary pictures where scenes are crystallised and people talk, there is the original journalist Thackeray. We cannot say "reporter," but how actual, on the spot, caught in the casualness of the moment, those people are. Rawdon's slang, even Jos Sedley's jokes, Becky's startling opening sentences, Geo. Osborne's exclamations—these are not jollifications of language; they are real. *Yellowplush*, the snob book, and in all those curious phonetic dialogues of his—Joyce-like in their way—indicate something like the modern ear's curiosity. Cut *Vanity Fair* by a third and the rest moves at once into step with our lives.

V. S. PRITCHETT

SPRING BOOKS

Next week's issue of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will be a special SPRING BOOKS NUMBER. Though necessarily shorter than usual, it will include a Selected List of Spring Books, extracts from Kafka's diaries, translated by Edwin Muir, and contributions from Cyril Connolly, E. M. Forster, Rosamond Lehmann, Peter Quennell, Rose Macaulay, Edward Sackville West and Arthur Waley.

URBS

Daily Life in Ancient Rome. By JEROME CARCOPINO. Translated by E. O. LORIMER and annotated by HENRY T. ROWELL. *Routledge.* 16*s.* 6*d.*

How far M. Carcopino's book will be useful to scholars I am quite unqualified to judge, but to the common reader like myself it is of the greatest interest. It can be particularly recommended to school libraries for the enlivenment it would bring to the tedious though rewarding study of the Latin tongue. The author, who was Director of the Ecole Française de Rome and is now the Vichy Minister of Education, gives an account of how men and women lived in Rome round about A.D. 100. His book lacks the distinction of Dill's great work on Roman Society, but it is never either dull or vulgar; and is a useful supplement to Dill, being concerned less with the thoughts of men than with their physical environment and habits. The sections dealing with population and housing, based on the latest epigraphical and archæological evidence, are specially interesting. M. Carcopino gives a vivid description, which the illustrations in the book amplify, of the many-storeyed tenements into which the vast majority of the Romans were crowded like modern slum-dwellers. Within a comparatively small area the Rome of the Antonines must have contained, he reckons, about 1,200,000 souls. Of these over one-third lived on public charity, with free baths as well as free bread and free circuses. This parasitic and demoralised proletariat was maintained, like the few thousand multi-millionaires, at the expense partly of the artisans and slaves, chiefly of the countryside and the distant parts of the Empire. The working day of the artisan was only of six to seven hours, and there were already under Claudius 150 public holidays in each year, a number that rose to 200 in the fourth century. In Rome even the slaves, I think, flourished upon the exploitation of the provinces. For as often as not they could acquire pickings enough, from the gold perpetually pouring into the city, to purchase their freedom and to become bourgeois. Nor must the reader forget that the book deals exclusively with the Urbs, which was not so much the heart of the Empire as an exhausting cancer in its vitals. Doubtless some of its inhabitants lived the good life, but we must look chiefly to the provinces for evidence of that civic ardour and tranquil good sense which we associate with the Roman name.

After reading M. Carcopino, I am more than ever convinced that the general opinion that we have of Rome is extremely delusive; it is based upon misconceptions which grew up during the Renaissance and which are still handed on from one generation to another. Indeed, I would be so rash as to suggest that the chief justification of Latin in education is to be found not in the achievements of Rome but in the fruitful results to European civilisation that were brought about by a misunderstanding of those achievements. In morality, in literature, in philosophy, in science, in architecture the performance of Rome is inferior to that of Greece, France, Italy and England, to say nothing of China. (And it must be remembered that we count as Romans men from three continents; some of the most celebrated Latin writers came, for instance, from Spain.) Transport was probably the technique for which the Romans were most remarkable; Trajan could travel across Europe as rapidly as Napoleon. Another invention that cannot be denied to them is that of the gladiatorial games—a custom more disgusting even than the mass sacrifices of the Mexicans, who at least believed that their cruelty was necessary in order to placate the gods. The principal contribution of the Romans to civilisation was that they spread over half Europe the ideas of the Jews and the Greeks—two peoples whom they

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particularly despised. But the Latin language and history remain of capital importance because of the part they have played in the construction of medieval and modern Europe. Adam de St. Victor, St. Thomas Aquinas, Chaucer, Dante, Froissart, Petrarch, Bacon, Spinoza, Milton—these are only a few names taken from the long illustrious roll of those who have delighted to use the tongue of ancient Rome. And to suggest its influence upon vernacular literature one needs to mention the names only of Ben Jonson, Racine, Dryden, Pope, Voltaire, Gibbon, Goethe and Baudelaire. In architecture and painting the idea of Rome has similarly generated innumerable works vastly superior to any achievement of classical Rome—works ranging in date from the Cathedral of Autun to the Petit Trianon, from Fra Angelico and Mantegna to Ingres and even Picasso. Consequently we tend to imagine that the Rome of Vitruvius was aesthetically comparable to the Rome of Michelangelo. But to find the equivalent of the architectural glories of the Imperial city one should perhaps examine not the Capitol or St. Peter's but the tawdry monument to Vittorio Emmanuele.

It was in Morocco, years ago, that I first caught a notion of what life in Rome may have been. Whereas the genius and sensibility of successive generations in Europe have constructed a Rome in their own image, the world of Islam, to which Rome is hardly more than a name, has perpetuated, I believe, many of the most conspicuous features of Roman life. Watching the Moors in their white robes strutting or riding through the narrow streets of Fez or listening to the story-tellers in the square of Marrakech, I surmised that there, rather than in the neat accounts by Alma Tadema or Poynter, the image of Roman life could be recognised. Repeatedly M. Carcopino draws upon the Moslem world for parallels, and I believe that a knowledge of Morocco has been invaluable to his account of Roman life—is indeed a requisite henceforward to be demanded of all who seek to describe Roman society. This belief is much less paradoxical than it may appear. Europe, for at least eight hundred years, has indulged an insatiable appetite for change which is unique in history, while the world of Islam has shown the conservatism normal in human societies. Having adopted the habits of the Roman provinces that it captured, it has retained them comparatively unchanged. This fact has been concealed by a few Moslem uses, such as the veils of the women, the head-coverings of the men, the horse-shoe arch and the Arab script. Look at this paragraph from M. Carcopino's book:

> All communications in the city were dominated by this contrast between day and night. By day there reigned intense animation, a breathless jostle, an infernal din. The *tabernae* were crowded as soon as they opened and spread their displays into the street. Here barbers shaved their customers in the middle of the fairway. There the hawkers from Transtiberina passed along, bartering their packets of sulphur matches for glass trinkets. Elsewhere the owner of a cook-shop, hoarse with calling to deaf ears, displayed his sausages piping hot in their saucepan. Schoolmasters and their pupils shouted themselves hoarse in the open air. On the one hand, a money-changer rang his coins with the image of Nero on a dirty table, on another a beater of gold dust pounded with his shining mallet on his well-worn stone. At the cross-roads a circle of idlers gaped round a viper-tamer; everywhere tinkers' hammers resounded and the quavering voices of beggars invoked the name of Bellona or rehearsed their adventures and misfortunes to touch the hearts of the passers-by.

Again and again one seems to be reading a description of modern life in Fez or Aleppo. The rich, for instance, lived among the slums in houses with no windows on the streets. The heating provided, except on the ground floor, by braziers was inadequate; despite the luxuriance of aqueducts, there was no water laid on; and water-carriers were ubiquitous. The vast majority had to use public latrines, and filth was often emptied into the streets. Fires were no less common than in the Stamboul of the Sultans. There was little furniture; even the rich slept, without sheets, in their day clothes. Men never shaved themselves; the barber used depilatories and tweezers as well as the razor; and both sexes repaired regularly for cleanliness to the hammam. It was customary to wash the feet when entering a house. Women took little part in selling goods, and the men also did most of the marketing. Education was largely a matter of learning texts by heart. Meals were taken in a reclining position, and belching was a polite sign of appreciation. Gambling was endemic, but chess was also very popular. Slaves rose to be the chief ministers of the ruler, to the disgust of the well-born whom they frequently condemned to expropriation or death. The Emperor was obliged to neglect his graver duties to judge private law-suits. There was great vagueness about the time of day (hours being of different lengths according to the season). Astrologers and fortune-tellers of all sorts carried great weight. Eunuchs were highly prized. Though there was no polygamy, the rich could maintain a seraglio of slaves purchased for their beauty. The Romans, moreover, seem, like the Moors and Persians in more recent times, to have had a natural taste for what is politely known as unnatural vice.

No doubt a scholar, familiar equally with the evidence about ancient Rome and with the surviving customs of the urban Moslem, could multiply such parallels. Is not the *Satyricon* a succession of scenes that might come from *The Arabian Nights*, described by a more sophisticated writer? And to find equivalents to the Cæsars, as described by Suetonius, one must look to the courts not of European monarchs but of the Shahs, Khalifs and Sultans. It is of course ways of life, not ways of thought, that Islam has, I suggest, inherited from Rome. Moslem society is in a hundred ways admirable, but has it produced historians comparable in narrative or analysis with Tacitus, poets comparable in sobriety and elegance with Horace and Catullus? It is Christendom that has inherited what was most valuable in Roman civilisation, the codification of law, the skill in administration, the religious tolerance, and the high status of women, as well as the moral, intellectual and æsthetic values that Rome has transmitted to us from Palestine and Greece. The prestige of Latin may be based partly upon a legend, but it is a legend that has animated most of what is cardinal in our civilisation, ranging from the august internationalism of the Catholic Church to the Palladian mansions that embellish our countryside, from the language of the most gifted modern peoples to the contempt for tyranny that now gives dignity to our resolution in self-defence.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

ENGLISH SOCIALISM

British Working Class Politics, 1832-1914.
By G. D. H. COLE. *Routledge.* 7s. 6d.

Mr. Cole has written a very useful book. It is not ornamental and it is no good complaining about this; it is not intended to be ornamental. It is just full of hard facts. Mr. Cole has given a straightforward history of "Labour" in the political arena from the Reform Act to the outbreak of the European war of 1914. The value of his book consists in its detailed study of the evolution of the modern Labour Party from the action of 24 Trade Unionists on November 12, 1867, when, as members of The London Working Men's Association, they published a manifesto on "the Direct Representation of Labour in Parliament." The evolution was painful, protracted, and perplexed; it cannot be traced or displayed without dealing with an immense number of persons and facts (often connected with organisation) which are not in themselves very interesting or important. Mr. Cole has performed this part of his task with thoroughness and skill. He does not shirk these facts; he rations the jam to the powder pretty severely; but because he has a singularly nice judgment of how important such facts are he makes them as interesting as it is possible to make them. He keeps himself and his own views, except upon rare occasions, in the background, but when he does express an opinion or puts forward a general hypothesis or theory, it is very much to the point and makes the reader think.

There is a good deal for any intelligent reader to think about in this book. As it shows, the political history of Labour in Britain has been a strange one during the period covered by Mr. Cole and even subsequently. Compared with other European industrial workers, the British were extraordinarily fertile in creating economic organisation for protecting their interests under the capitalist system. They developed those organisations to a high pitch of efficiency. No one who examined the history of the Co-operative and Trade Union Movements down to the end of the nineteenth century would be inclined to say that their creators were not politically minded, class conscious, and fully aware of their position in the capitalist system. Over half a century before Labour had shown itself also fully aware in the Chartist Movement of the vital importance to it of political action and of democracy. Yet 70 years after the Chartist Movement Labour was still politically undeveloped, hesitant, and ineffective. No member of the working classes was elected to the House of Commons until 1886 and there was no Labour Party in Parliament until 20 years after that. Compare this with the evolution in Germany: already in 1874 the German Social-Democratic Party had seven members and the Lassalle Association three members in the Reichstag and by 1912 the German Labour Party, with 110 members, was the largest party in Parliament.

Mr. Cole's book may, if it is carefully studied, lead members of the existing Labour Movement to understand the causes of this paradox; that gives it its value and importance, for the causes go deep into our social system, are complicated, and are still operant. Among the most persistent causes these deserve attention: the attachment of the workers, first to the Liberal Party and later to liberalism; the Trade Unionist basis of the political party; the immunity of the British worker to infection by Marxism or indeed by any socialist ideas. As a Socialist, one laments these facts, but one ignores them at one's peril. They are all interconnected and form a single complex. For instance, the typical proletarian, the active and intelligent Trade Unionist, obstinately refuses to think and act in the way in which the Marxian system requires him to think and act. The inoculation of Trade Unionism in fact gives the mind a very high resisting power to Socialism and almost complete immunity from revolutionary Socialism. The Trade Union is not merely part of the capitalist system; it has no *raison d'être* apart from that system. The more active the Trade Unionist the more inevitably and unconsciously he comes to accept the capitalist system as the natural and necessary economic framework of society. The weakness of the Socialist government and the inanition of the Social-Democratic leaders in Germany after 1918 were largely due to this fact. The reader may observe that the same fact is intimately connected with the three causes given above, for the slow and non-socialist development of the British Labour Party. The Labour leaders were liberals and remained attached to the Liberal Party because they were Trade Unionists.

The fact that the basis of the Labour political organisation was the Trade Unions therefore continually retarded and obstructed its development, and, when at last it had developed into a "Labour Party," it obstinately remained "liberal" and refused to become Socialist. The paradox of the Marxian theory and system is that, though they are 99 per cent. true, the proletariat obstinately refuses to think and act as the class-conscious proletariat ought to think and act. How can it be induced to do so? That is a most important problem for British Labour and Mr. Cole in his last chapter has some interesting speculations upon possible methods of educating the Labour Party in Socialism from within. The Socialist who has a sense of humour may enjoy the irony of the situation, even though the laugh is so obviously against him.

LEONARD WOOLF

NEW NOVELS

Summer 1914. By ROGER MARTIN DU GARD. *Lane.* 25s.

My Name is Aram. By WILLIAM SAROYAN. *Faber.* 7s. 6d.

Immortal Ease. By KATHLEEN COYLE. *Gollancz.* 9s.

Not being one of those who admire the mammoth I begin to be impatient with any novelist (lacking the privileges of genius) who goes beyond 150,000 words. When I am invited to double the distance, as is the case with *Summer 1914*, I find it difficult to behave temperately. There may be stories which cannot be told in less than a quarter of a million words, but the more common reasons for inordinate length are less sublime; either the author lacks any talent for selection and concentration, or he is a natural bore. M. Martin du Gard is a bore. Like the hostess who makes you look at family snapshots for too long, he cherishes the belief that nothing connected with his story can be too trivial to fascinate the lucky reader. Happily there are those who like mere vastness in which to "lose themselves." To them I recommend *Summer 1914* with the assurance that when they clamber out at the far end they will find themselves in a state of Rip Van Winkledom.

The story is set in international socialist circles on the eve of the last war. The hero, Jacques Thibault, is apparently a pacifist, and he is working to preserve peace. When war is inevitable he strives to organise resistance. His final effort is to fly a cargo of anti-war pamphlets over the French and German Armies in Alsace; but the plane crashes and Jacques, unable to explain his identity, is regarded as a German spy and shot by retreating French troops. This rather slight theme is fortified with a mass of circumstantial detail, historically documented and including prominent personalities of the time. Much of it, if a political novice may judge, is good diplomatic journalism of the "Dirt behind the headlines" sort.

The ideals which inspire the author are amiable ones. He sympathises with the downtrodden and wishes to save them from being destroyed as pawns in a clash of empires. The purpose of *Summer 1914* is to show that the last war was a shameful hoax on the workers (and, I suppose, to imply the same thing of the present one). As a minority news reel of back-stage politics *Summer 1914* is at least entertaining. As a soap-box oration it gives effective currency to ideas which M. Martin du Gard cherishes. And since those ideas are usually held to have contributed largely to France's present distress, I may add that as a publishing venture it is commendably courageous.

But alas, in spite of my incorrigible delight in sensational disclosures and minority opinions of every kind, I found this unprofitable reading. Like Duhamel, M. Martin du Gard has the

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old Academician's talent for spreading a palette-ful of commonplaces over a very large canvas. The result is competent in a garrulous and diffuse way, but the vastness of the dimension mocks the level of execution. The novel is a slack enough form to contain most things, but I grow more and more convinced that it imposes three limitations; it is not a good vehicle for intellectual debate in impersonal terms, it will not digest more than a small amount of detailed verisimilitude—still less of historical "real life"—and the novelist must not disclose that his mind is no richer than that of any one of his characters. The last of these limitations is the one which nourishes most of my quarrels with the books I review; at the risk of repeating myself I should like to expand it.

Look then for a moment at your own character. Be your own Boswell. What do you find? Of course, a well-meaning, peace-loving chap such that, if all the world were as he, there would be paradise on earth—saving perhaps a few venial faults, the mere quirks of individual temperament. And yet the day comes—it is our emancipation from adolescence—when we recognise that the rest of the world is, after all, very much like ourselves. With that recognition we understand that the radiant familiarity of the heroic human soul has its dark side, an unsuspected streak of infirmity, something concealed in shadow that, as it were, jogs our virtuous elbow. There is the planned and cultivated field of our deliberate character; and on the fringes of it there is a jungle that we fail to penetrate or control completely. On the maps of theology this jungle is named Original Sin. Other maps, other names; but still, I think, the same jungle. No act of self-knowledge can comprehend the whole ground: the disparity must be made good by an objective critique. In other words, the full truth must be both confessed and witnessed; and the relationship of the novelist to his fictitious characters is, ideally, to perfect their confessions—the selves that they are willing and able to disclose—by the addition of his witness. The difference between Fiction and Life is that in Fiction there is some greater degree of illumination of what I have called the "dark side" of a character.

In *Summer* 1914 Jacques Thibault remarks "I've had occasion to go into the psychology of Poincaré pretty thoroughly for an article in *The Beacon.*' It is an unimportant remark, but I think it betrays the complacent, pompous accent of an intellectual Blimp. M. Martin du Gard perhaps recalls writing an article of that sort himself for a paper like *The Beacon*, so he dwells on it with a loving absence of criticism. Equally in larger matters it does not occur to him that Jacques is ever under judgment. Jacques is at all points the hero battling with an iniquitous "they"; and I for one am sick of these virtuous saviours of the people, with their clap-trap ideas, their dreary mistresses, their muddled thinking, and the beautiful failure of their lives at the hands of the horrid "they." It would be refreshing to have someone say that the men of Jacques' mob are about as corrupt as any other power-seekers. Their professed pacifism is an orthodox Communist device for converting a national war into a class war: it is not ethical but tactical. Far from possessing any profundity of wisdom or of love, they are superficial in thought and sentimental in feeling. Far from being the victims of heartless monsters, they are, by their own acts, trapped in the tragic situation which is the inheritance of all mankind. Only when *that* has been recognised can the stage be set to display their virtues.

Perhaps what I have written about *Summer* 1914 may sound rather harsh, but I feel that a book which gains the Nobel Prize should stand up to punishment. In spite of the fact that nowadays the chief literary prizes have a way of falling to Mr. Charles Morgan, there is no reason why they should not be encouraged to recover some of the prestige which they ought to have.

Saroyan has the qualities which M. Martin du Gard lacks. His characters are subjected to an imaginative transformation, the furniture which his stories borrow from actuality is as sparing as possible, he has no narrowly ideological axe to grind, he possesses considerable expertness in the formal properties of words. In spite of his artistry, however, I have not cared much for Mr. Saroyan's earlier books, which seemed to suffer from a *chic* invertebracy, a pervasive Don't-kick-me-I'm-only-an-Armenian air. But in *My Name is Aram*, a collection of fanciful stories about the author and his relatives, Mr. Saroyan's showy virtuosity mellows to the gently whimsical self-deprecation which is the characteristic humour of the deracinated and the oppressed. The writing is extremely lively, the stories are daintily compounded of pity and wit and a lyrical absurdity. Mr. Saroyan is undoubtedly a little master of this kind of confectionery, which I can best describe as a blend of *Tristram Shandy* and Gerhardi's *The Polyglots.*

Rebecca West considers that Miss Kathleen Coyle is "a writer of such subtlety that for our own sakes we must watch her eagerly." I obediently watched Miss Coyle with the suggested self-interest while she made some very pretentious gestures at the beginning of *Immortal Ease*; after which I decided to take a chance, and instead watched my neighbour's wife hanging out some pleasantly homely washing. Kindness for kindness, I recommend those billowing sheets and undies to Miss West.

DESMOND HAWKINS

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DECLINE AND FALL

The Habsburg Monarchy. By A. J. P. TAYLOR. *Macmillan.* 15s.

This is a sober work, about a special subject, for historians. Any subscribers to popularised biography who hope for court gossip, pseudo-scientific generalisations about the Habsburg jaw, a backcloth of the Blue Danube and, squeezed hurriedly into the foreground, the late ex-king Alfonso as "last of the Habsburgs," will be disappointed. Mr. Taylor is concerned with a thoroughly businesslike examination of the constitutional issues of Austria and Austria-Hungary from 1815 until the collapse of the Empire, and with nothing else. It is not his fault that nothing whatever could instil particular vitality into this dreary process of disintegration.

The Habsburgs were the Austrian Empire, and only an early succession of lucky marriages and opportune deaths gave this long line of generally undistinguished and periodically unbalanced monarchs a unified control of the jostling middle-European peoples, who were themselves often the backwash of Asiatic invasion. There was racial disunity, religious dissension and judicial disparity, and Mr. Taylor quotes the verdict that to write the history of the Empire an author would need to know seventeen languages and to live ten times as long as mortal man. He himself, with scholarship and a knowledge of all the relevant authorities, mercifully confines himself to dignified English, specifically directed at readers who have no German. He occasionally indulges in an academic aphorism: "anyone who wishes to know what early nineteenth century Austria was like need only spend a holiday with the bureaucrats of the Indian Empire," but normally he has been content to reduce many sources into an untroubled and, in the middle reaches, rather turgid stream of constitutional progression.

Nineteenth-century Austria was the classic example of the police state: exercising stolid, stupid, and inefficient repression, very different from the ruthlessly efficient repression of the gangster state to-day. The Emperors played off against each other, through a succession of second-rate or cynically able ministers, the competing forces of German bureaucrats, racially demonstrative feudal nobles, and liberal intellectuals. These ministers were retired without hesitation as the game demanded, or as external forces, usually Prussian, desired. The only card which was never played with any confidence was that of an appeal to the masses: the dull, apathetic, politically unconscious peasants who toiled on the estates, and were, as circumstances demanded, marched off to serve in the monotonously unsuccessful Imperial armies. These peasants were illiterate and inarticulate, and in any case an appeal to the masses would have been unthinkable for a Habsburg. Superficially, too, the game went well enough. Austria remained a diplomatic punchball for Prussia, France, and later Italy. She astonished the world by her ineptitude, as much as by her ingratitude, but the various dissentient forces were normally kept in check, by adhering to Taafe's maxim of "keeping all the minorities in a state of balanced dissatisfaction," and at the end of the century historians were claiming glibly that the Empire was stronger than ever.

But the maggots were working hard inside. The racial groups had always been mutually intolerant, but now general resentment grew as well. Liberal feeling reinforced earlier racial expressions which had merely represented the desire of the nobility for local autonomy. The familiar demands began for the teaching of majority languages, instead of German, in the schools of the Empire; bodies which had been appointed to vote taxes remained to demand liberties; and the rather outmoded ideas of the first French revolution, coloured by German radicalism, discovered local tradition and racial oppression even where it did not historically exist. Elsewhere nationalism meant integration. In Austria it could only mean disintegration. Elsewhere advanced opinion was beginning to feel that progressive views demanded an international outlook. In Austria the romantic association of liberalism with nationalism still continued, although the work of Marx and Bakunin was increasingly read.

Francis Joseph grew older, the whole structure grew increasingly flimsy and topheavy, nationalism became increasingly vocal and organised, and only German military competence held the bits together when political and economic circumstances pushed the Empire, in 1914, into a war which was at first welcomed. When the Habsburgs, the purely negative, selfish, traditional force which had held the whole Empire together, were gone, there was nothing left.

All this is carefully related. It is a pity, perhaps, that Mr. Taylor has not allowed himself a little more latitude. He might have indicated the interest of comparing the Austrian disintegration with that of the Russian. It would have been interesting to have been given at least a paragraph describing the personal, as opposed to the dynastic interests of the emperors concerned—the most human character remains that epileptic Ferdinand whose sole recorded statement is "I am the Emperor, and I *will* have dumplings." It would have been useful to have had a more detailed account of the economic influences in Austria towards the end of the century: and the major events of external policy pop in and out rather perfunctorily. The war of 1866 intrudes suddenly in a paragraph and disappears again. There is no indication of the Imperial effect, in detail, on the supreme instrument of the dynasty, the Army. And the social background never appears at all. But within the limitations which the author has imposed upon himself, this will remain as an extremely useful and accurate treatment of the Habsburg regime in its last phases, and the constitutional effects of a survival into twentieth century Europe of a constitutional system three centuries out of date.

There are two of Mr. Horrabin's excellent maps.

PENNETHORNE HUGHES

A CLEAR-MINDED MAN

Autobiography. By ERIC GILL. *Cape.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

It is not often that a man and his work are identical. I recall only two men of whom I could say that, by applying the work against the man, the coincidence is like that of Euclid's triangles. Those two men were W. H. Davies and Eric Gill. In the latter it is the more remarkable because he is so much more complex a character.

Those complexities, with their surface contradictions and basic unity, suggest an affinity to William Blake. Both were artists with a mania for the clean line. Both were mystics in that special, medieval sense in which mysticism is the antithesis of woolliness and mushiness. Blake saw God in every bush. He saw God's love in the naked body of a woman. So did Gill, and he glorified what he saw. Blake sitting naked in his garden was a naive spectacle. Gill also had his naivety, a quality which in the twentieth century is in danger of being mistaken for archness and pose. Ten minutes' conversation with the man would have dispelled such a suspicion from the mind of the most blasé of critics.

As one can no longer hope for such a *tête-à-tête*, his *Autobiography* must serve instead. It will have the same effect upon the reader. It is clear, lucid, shining. It has that sort of spring-daybreak quality which was so evident in Gill's physical person; the manly stance, the ruddy, handsome face, the clear blue eyes lit up with joy and eagerness. He was a man to be envied.

He did not come to this state of mind, however, without a long struggle. His book is the story of that struggle. Mundane events do not figure largely in it. The few facts that occupied his life, or the few that he presents here, are used as explosives of the spirit. They are laid down as clearly and simply as the lines of his woodcuts.

He began as one of eight children of a Nonconformist parson earning £150 a year. Thus he started life by out-Olivering Goldsmith. The mother was the patient one, the realist; the father was the seeker, the idealist. He, like his son, had a passion for clean-cut processes:

> He was particularly enthusiastic about sharpening pencils properly, not only about doing it the right way but doing it so as to produce the right result—a well-sharpened pencil. Hundreds of times I was shown how to do it or pulled up for carelessness in not doing it properly. This is perhaps a small thing, but it is clear that if a man will make such a molehill into a mountain he must be taking things pretty seriously. And that is the point. There's quite a lot in sharpening pencils and the man who sees more in it than others is not lowering himself to pettiness but raising the job to nobility.

That is the seed of his education. He conducted his whole life on that principle learned from his father. "Education is by the doing not by the learning. And that is, in my mind, the whole secret of education, whether in schools or in workshops or in life."

Those axioms are enunciated at the beginning of his book. The adventures and achievements that follow are only a demonstrated proof of them. He takes great pains about it, as he does about all his work. "As this book is a business of making mountains out of molehills, I want to get the mountains the right shape." It is Blake's "grain of sand" again.

Thus, as one can see the man and his book are doomed to clarity. The circumstances of his life conspired to assist the process. His father, driven by conviction into the Church of England, took a curacy in Chichester at £90 a year, and the family migrated from the suburbs of Brighton, where the artist had been born. The change from higgledy-piggledy surroundings to those of a medieval town inspired him at once with a consciousness of a shapely and centralised social life. Ever after, he saw the town not as a "wen," but as the crown of the countryside, its ornament and brain. In the right articulation of rural and urban life he saw the perfect social expression of that unity which should also direct the life of the individual. He found this unity early for himself, overcoming by a stroke of genius those dreadful questionings which beset youth when sex begins to set fire to the house of childhood. He soon found that "man is matter and spirit," and he set about at once to identify them. He married at twenty-two and had a family within which he sat like a smiling patriarch of the Old Testament. He transmuted in a miraculous way all the inherited prudery of his puritan ancestry. "Are not those organs which sometimes seem, to ourselves and to others, the very root of scandal, are they not also thus redeemed and made dear? For they are literally our flowers. What are those lovely creatures which we delight to fill our gardens with and to display on our tables? What are they, indeed, but the sex organs of the plants they adorn?" Thus, without any self-conscious smirk, he is able to ask, and to ask it in a religious context which might have made it stink of hypocrisy, "Have you felt the smooth whiteness of the flesh between her thighs and the dividing roundness? Such thoughts are kindling to our fires." And his fires are the fires of creative energy, and an exultant, boyish enjoyment of life on earth, which, in spite of the fact that he moved on to Catholicism, was for him also life in heaven. For his innocent mind had got things worked out by now. With the help of Aquinas he could put his instincts into a logical formula. "It is only in Order that the mind can find rest."

Thus consolidated as man and artist, he looked around him on the industrial world. His reaction was like that which occasioned a certain incident amongst the money-changers on the steps of the Temple.

> The man of business, as such, is a parasite. In the nature of things there is no reason for his existence. . . . But, be that as it may (and any civilisation can endure a certain small proportion of pimps and thieves without succumbing—just as a man can endure a few warts and spots on his body without dying), what is truly monstrous and disruptive and corrupting to our life and virtue is that such persons should be our rulers—that they should have usurped the seats of kings, that their hideous teaching should have replaced the Gospel. That is what is unendur-

G.B.S. and WELLS on *Press Freedom in Wartime*

MARCH

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able; that is what is unforgivable; that is what God will neither endure nor forgive. And we are blind. By far the greater number of our people, even those who are its most abject victims, are filled with enthusiasm at the spectacle of the England that is the product of industrial capitalism. Eccentric persons such as I are not only voices crying in the wilderness; we are voices crying in a mad-house.

And he does not exonerate his fellow Catholics, nor the Church itself, for philistinish compliance in this state of public affairs.

He escaped by refusing to enter a profession, architecture, to which he was articled. He preferred to become a workman, a stonemason and letterer. But his genius—and it cannot be denied that this man was possessed by genius—because of his simplicity, shone through the work of his hands, and he was soon in danger of becoming a successful man, a fashionable artist. It was only his other activity, his quest for a final home in religion, that enabled him to go on unscathed. He loathed the world of Art. "I did not believe in Art or the art world. But, of course, I believed very much in the arts (with a small 'a' and an 's') whether it be the art of cooking or that of painting portraits or church pictures." He had no use for aestheticism. To him the arts were a form of ministry, and meant to serve a symbolic purpose. Thus his work, and his particular form of guild socialism, drove him to a detestation of most of the features of modern civilisation, with its Fabian bureaucracy, its centralisation, mass-production, and all the rest of the dreary and impersonal ugliness from which most of us are either unable, or unwilling, to escape. Gill escaped, for he lived and died a happy man, lit up, like Blake or Davies, by an incandescence of his own passions into a clear flame of charity.

RICHARD CHURCH

EMPIRE—"MINUS" THE COLONIES

Cambridge History of the British Empire. Vol. II. The Growth of the New Empire 1783–1870. *Cambridge.* 50*s.*

Of necessity, and rightly, one great theme dominates the story of the Empire in the century following the break-away of America in 1783—the evolution of those great colonies that are now the Dominions. It is well set out in this volume, more particularly from the British end, as each Dominion has already a volume on its internal growth. The economic chapters here are perhaps the freshest. An interesting analogy suggests that British control was very much that of debenture holders in a great corporation, leaving the colonies only an "ordinary" share, an "equity" in their own enterprise. Fortunately the equity proved to be reasonably good. The relationship was thus of benefit to both parties, so that a smooth working out of political relationships was easier. *Laisser-faire*, whatever else it did, averted a repetition of the clash of 1776, and laid the foundations of the modern Commonwealth.

So far so good. But the public has a right to ask the Empire historian for help in understanding the unsolved problem of relationship with the still wholly dependent colonies. This 1,000-page tome, No. 2, is the last but one to appear of eight volumes. No. 1 had been assigned to the "Old" Empire, Nos. 4-8 to India and the Dominions, so that in this volume, over and above the theme of the Dominions from the home angle, room had to be found for a number of special topics—slavery and the slave trade, transportation, emigration, not least a serviceable estimate of the Gibbon Wakefield experiments. Among all these the history of the dependent Empire comes in as an "also ran" in a series of disconnected chapters. Even then the approach is old-fashioned. Very full accounts of international rivalry make it clear that a conventionally "Imperialist" Britain might have acquired many more colonies than she did. As if this restraint were matter for regret we hear more than once of colonies "saved for the Empire." Captain George Maclean, who by sheer force of personality "judged" (in the Biblical sense) the Gold Coast very beneficently for fourteen years, is given as his highest claim to commendation that he thus "saved" West Africa. The all-important question, how the people saved actually benefited, gets at best an incomplete, and at times a rather dusty, answer.

A good case is made, certainly, for the Colonial Office itself. Study of official minutes reveals a high level of care and intelligence under Sir James Stephen and many capable successors. If the trend, at least in the Crown Colonies, continued to be authoritarian, the reason was by no means only a fear of more of them trying the American remedy. The one-sided claims and demands of white settlers called for strong government, so that even humanitarian influence pulled on the authoritarian side. The demand of "the colonists" (i.e. the coffee planters) of Ceylon for roads and bridges was in fact so strong that it used up the revenues, "*and thus*," we read, left little for irrigation, which "more affected the good of the people." So also the history even of the West Indies is here no more than a survey, useful in itself, of the ups and downs of the planters' sugar industry. It is to be noted that there were enough "ups" to check any attempt to deal with abandoned (I like the Jamaica word "ruinate") estates. "The people" get no more than perfunctory paragraphs on "welfare," mostly a blank negative. We might conclude that but for the planters' "labour difficulties" all had been well.

The weakness is in the editing. It is startling to come to the solemnly documented statement that share-cropping, or *métayage*, introduced in the difficult 'forties, was *still* widely prevalent in 1886. It is of course no less prevalent to-day; but the period here covered ends in 1870—which is absurd. The story of the Crown Colonies is a single story, continuous and not very long. The problem they present is very largely *one* problem—of which this book gives hardly an inkling. That part of the Empire which is not yet Commonwealth needed one volume to itself in this vast History of the Empire. And since history is in any case unintelligible without a background, the story should have been prefaced with chapters on the geography, human as well as physical, of the tropics in which that Empire lies. Here there is hardly a decent awareness of the immensity even of the highly peculiar agricultural problems involved. The Editors should look to such points even at this late stage. The last remaining volume, No. 3, is here announced as dealing—surely too comprehensively—with "The *Empire Commonwealth*, 1870–1921."

W. M. MACMILLAN

La France Libre, No. 5. Mars, 1941. 2*s.* 6*d.*

This admirable monthly continues to improve. To the latest number M. Labarthe, who has something of Michelet's fire, contributes a just and eloquent protest against the French authors who, with the bitterness always dangerous to the émigré besmirch their country under the delusion that they are analysing its defeat. It is to be hoped that no more such books will appear, since they seem only to excite scepticism among foreigners about the French capacity for resuscitation. The policy of *La France Libre* is to recreate a belief in the greatness of France, and apart from three well informed articles on German propaganda in the United States, on the petrol fields of the Near East, and on "La guerre des laboratoires" (gas and bacillus warfare), each article serves this fine purpose. M. René Avord provides a thoughtful analysis of the Vichy regime, showing that it must be transitory; there is an account of some Free French naval operations

Company Meeting

BOVRIL LTD.

EVERYBODY A FOOD SPECIALIST.

PRESIDING at the forty-fourth annual general meeting of Bovril, Ltd., held in London on March 14th, Lord Luke, K.B.E. (chairman), after dealing with the accounts, said that although, apart from Government orders, the Bovril sales were much in excess of those in 1939, the increased cost of all materials and expenses (with the exception of advertising), resulted in the profit on trading being £21,200 down. Wages were of course up, and war commodity insurance was a much larger item this year. On the other hand the Company had not increased the selling price of Bovril, thus maintaining the same policy as during the last war, when the selling price remained unaltered.

THRIFT AND SMALL INVESTORS

Eighty per cent. of Bovril's 15,000 shareholders had holdings of 300 shares or less. These investors had in many cases holdings in other concerns, and in these difficult days for companies they did not get much of an average return, especially after taxation had taken its share. This was very unfortunate, for if there was one habit that should be encouraged now and in the hard years to come it was thrift.

Running businesses at present was an adventure all the time. You had got to think ahead. You could forget the profit factor, but you had to remember that your business was not only running to preserve the savings of thousands of small investors but for the benefit of the population in general.

IMPORTANCE OF APPETISING MEALS

According to the definition of a Specialist as a person who knows more and more about less and less, he thought it could be said that we were all becoming Food Specialists nowadays. The quantity of some of our foods might be growing less and less, but—thanks to the experts of the Ministry of Food, and others—we knew more and more about making the best of them.

One point on which the experts through the Press and B.B.C. laid great stress was the importance of making meals tempting to the appetite, as well as satisfying from the purely nutritional point of view. For a tasty appetising meal was undoubtedly more easily digested and better assimilated than a dull meal unattractively served up.

Beef was, of course, a food rich in protein. It was one of what were called the body-building foods. But this was not the main reason why Britons had always consumed such large quantities of "The Roast Beef of Old England." This was to be accounted for by the excellent and appetising flavour of beef.

It was here that Bovril was proving of real and unique service on the Kitchen Front. For the flavour of Bovril was the concentrated flavour of beef retained in all its goodness, and available for making any less attractive dish appetising and tasty. It might not be generally realised just how concentrated this goodness was. In fact, it took no less than forty pounds of fresh beef to produce one pound of the essential beef flavour in Bovril. This was the explanation of the fact that very little was enough to enliven and enrich dishes made from the less expensive cuts of meat—or even completely meatless dishes—with the appetising flavour that belonged to beef alone.

TAKING A REEF IN THE SALES

As an increase in Bovril sales had become an inconvenience, it was something of a nuisance that sales had almost run away with the company of late, and they were cutting down their advertising to see if thereby they could restrict them. That they should have to try to reduce sales seemed a little topsy turvy, but no one had any idea of the impediments that cropped up daily in the way of production, and particularly in the way of packing an article in small units such as were essential for popular distribution in these times.

It had become necessary to meet not only all their Service orders promptly, but also this increase of ordinary trade. If, as Lord Luke hoped, the war was over by the time of the next annual meeting, he would have pleasure in telling them some stories of the astounding difficulties surmounted by what remained of their staff and workpeople.

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Rates and all information on page 312

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NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

INDEX

AN Index to Vol. XX is now ready. It will be sent to Postal Subscribers free of charge on application; and for 1/- post free to other readers. The Publisher, NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

from log-books a passage by M. Louis Lévy about a well fought engagement in the too short campaign; an account of an escape from a German prison-camp, a penetrating article by Mr. Wickham Steed on France's future contribution to Europe; a paper by M. Jules Romains, who is in America, sensibly commenting on events; and a convincing assertion by Professor Focillon of France's remarkable achievements during recent years. Most convincing of all is a collection of letters from anonymous French listeners to the B.B.C. No Englishman could read these without being deeply moved, and renewing his faith in our Ally.

Remains of Old Latin, IV. Archaic Inscriptions; translated by E. H. WARMINGTON. **Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Roman Antiquities, III**; translated by E. CARY. **Manetho and Ptolemy**; translated by W. G. WADDELL and by F. E. ROBBINS. **Minor Attic Orators, I. Antiphon and Andocides**; translated by K. J. MAIDMENT. **Dio Chrysostom, III**; translated by J. W. COHOON and H. LAMAR CROSBY. **Athenaeus. The Deipnosophists, VII**; translated by C. B. GULICK. *Loeb Classical Library. Heinemann.* Each volume 10*s. cloth*, 12*s.* 6*d. leather*.

These six additions, one Latin and five Greek, to the long list of the Loeb series all maintain the high standard to which we are accustomed. Professor Warmington's is an eminently scholarly piece of work for scholars. Mr. Maidment introduces two important but hitherto rather neglected Athenian pleaders. Dionysius' Roman history has reached the beginning of the Republic; the Dio volume includes Discourses 31 to 36. Manetho, an Egyptian priest who wrote his history in Greek, and Ptolemy the Alexandrian are little known in these days, though his *Tetrabiblos* was the Bible, so to speak, of ancient and medieval astrologers. Readers who enjoy the "olla podrida" of Athenaeus will be grateful to Professor Gulick, not only for his translation and notes, but for the very full index covering all the seven volumes in which this edition of the *Deipnosophists* has been published.

Week-end Competitions

No. 581

Set by Robinson Moody

A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for the best extract from a panegyric upon Dr. Vaughan Williams in the style of any of the English poets. Entries not to exceed twelve lines.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, March 31st.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 578

Set by William Whitebait

We offer the usual prizes of Two Guineas and Half a Guinea for the best nostalgic lyric addressed to a cabin-trunk.

Report by William Whitebait

So far as I remember, cabin-trunks—unlike pipes and rucksacks—were not among the regular properties of Georgian poets, but most competitors have hit the Georgian note. The names on the labels form a refrain—Chimborazos and Cotopaxis nearer home; memory goes down to the sea in ships, though the ship may be off on a luxury cruise; the trunk itself, much-labelled and haunting the attic, is addressed with touching *camaraderie*. The sentiment of W. H. Victory's "To a Cabin-Trunk" was enlivened by a good pun:

> Companion of my devious ways
> Our roaming soon will be a dream,
> While thou, through long, unstirring days
> In attic splendour reign supreme.

And Sir Robert Witt, too, mingled nostalgia with wit:

> . . . Labelled with every brief abiding,
> Like medals on a soldier's breast,
> Our modest progress scarcely hiding,
> Savoy, Ritz, Bristol—all the best.
>
> Thy secret drawer, our joint invention
> My treasures cabined, cribbed, confined,
> Arranged with contraband intention
> To foil the Customs' curious mind.

Otherwise liveliness was rather spasmodic. One verse began well with a reference to Joanna Southcott's trunk and then tailed off; there were several shots at the sort of haunting lyric crooners put over, but none of these quite came off. William Stewart produced some amusing verses on the discomforts of travel:

> We've not forgotten that wild night
> When you (and I) were much too tight:
> Those yellow stitches put *you* right,
> I hope and trust.

H. Wilson was good on smells and third-rate hotels, "Jacobus" on South America. Among straight poems of regret I liked L. Marshall Jones's "On Seeing the Cabin Trunk in a Shelter":

> There were souvenirs on top.
> Crushed shirts were underneath,
> With a gay and motley crop
> Of snaps. A bit of heath.
>
> There were shoes with foreign mud.
> A dull passport—nearly new.
> Bright socks that never could
> Be passed at family "view."

On the whole, this was the best of the runners-up. "Gragge N.A.2" showed a lively originality in choice both of theme and metre, and easily wins the first prize. Paul Dehn, with a neatly worked-out contrast, gets the second.

FIRST PRIZE

> Among my friends in my Balham rooms
> I lean on my trunk with pleasure:
> I can see so well
> That drab hotel
> In that horrible town in Cheshire.
>
> I thought the porter slow with the trunk
> Though possibly I maligned him.
> "My wife," I said,
> "Has gone ahead,"
> As he lugged her down behind him.
>
> Through Victorian streets my wife and I
> Were borne in a hackney-carriage:
> 'Twas the gayest ride
> We'd had since I'd
> Been blarneyed into marriage.
>
> They trundled her out to Platform Three
> (For porters are not agile!);
> But it wasn't *nice*,
> So I warned them twice
> And finally marked her fragile.
>
> I can't remember where it was
> That I hoiked her out of hiding,
> But I do recall
> That her head *would* fall
> As if her neck were sliding.
>
> Then I balanced her on the window ledge
> And slowly heaved her over
> With a mental prayer
> That she'd still be there
> For the nine o'clock from Dover.
>
> The papers gave her seven lines
> And didn't even mention
> Her naked state
> Or her battered pate—
> But such was my intention.
>
> And here I lean against the trunk
> And, as the straps I tighten,
> I smile and say
> "She's still away
> At Bath—or is it Brighton?"

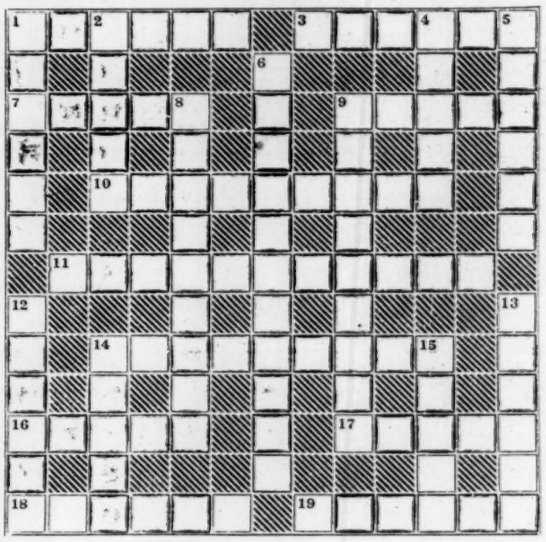
GRAGGE N.A.2

SECOND PRIZE

> There blows upon the barrack-square
> A thin wind that is Spring's.
> Ah, fetch my cabin-trunk and keys . . .
> (Division ordered overseas!
> Batman, out with the valise!)
> Long-dead traveller, on your knees
> And pack the ghosts of things.
>
> The blue shirt, the red scarf
> And the white shoes to run
> Across the hot Calabrian grass
> (Ten detectors anti-gas!
> Unit embarkation-pass!)
> And the spectacles with dark glass
> For blacking-out the sun.
>
> Lipstick for Giulietta
> That Schiaparelli made,
> A doll for the *bambino*
> ("Greece," they say—but *we* know!
> Kiwi, Stay-brite, Clean-o!)
> And smart shirts for Nicolino
> From the Burlington Arcade.
>
> Call the taxi, click the latch.
> A month; and you'll be home.
> (Boots, binoculars and maps!
> Roll the blankets! Pull the straps!)
> Olive-oil and bathing-wraps . . .
> See the dandiest of chaps
> Set out to conquer Rome.

PAUL DEHN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 24 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is:
Miss D. Atthay, 533 Finchley Road, N.W.3

ACROSS

1. Cut for Scot. (6)
3. Piper's son? (3 hyphen 3)
7 *rev.* Pianola in flat. (5)
9. P-peer. (5)
10 *rev.* For money orders, a guinea. (9)
11. *Congé.* (6 & 5)
14. I request you to make certain. (5 & 4)
16. Stick in the kitchen. (5)
17. It wasn't 'is boots 'e used to wear away. (5)
18. Settled about fifty-fifty. (6)
19. Fine for female fool? (6)

DOWN

1. One the Hay and Chaff Diet? (6)
2. Here's the money for your brother's donkey ride. (5)
4. Hobo quietly lies under street car. (5)
5. Sea-sick *en route*? (6)
6. Incumbent on you as a Quaker, yes? (2, 2, 3 & 4)
8. An ordinary quarrel. (9)
9. Carry on without rhyme but not without reason. (9)
12 *rev.* Over or under the cloth! (6)
13. Gross idea to fall asleep over THE NEW STATESMAN? (6)
14. Fear of the flier. (5)
15. Call up if that's all right in the evening. (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

LIFTING A TREASURY BAN—OVER-VALUED EQUITIES—" CONCENTRATING " BANKS

THE Treasury has at last lifted its ban on municipal conversion issues. Loans carrying over 4 per cent. interest, where a repayment option is exercisable, can now be converted or repaid. To avoid the necessity of underwriting and the risk of overloading the market the Treasury has been authorised to make loans out of the Local Loans Fund up to the amount required to cover cash repayments to investors who do not convert. This is all to the good. Local authorities have over £30 millions of stock outstanding with over 4 per cent. coupons which can be called now or this year. In this cheap money period it is absurd to see repayable 6 per eent. gilt-edged loans standing uncalled in the market and costing the local authorities an unnecessary big packet in interest charges. The same concession should now be made to Dominion Government borrowers who have repayable loans outstanding at 6 per cent. and 5 per cent. I seem to see in this enlightened move in the gilt-edged market the progressive hand of the Treasury's new advisers, one of the most active of whom is Mr. J. M. Keynes.

* * *

The directors of Associated Portland and British Portland Cement sharply reminded the market last Friday how silly it was to mark up equity shares regardless of wartime dividends and taxation. The dividend of 10 per cent. brought Associated Portland down from 58*s.* 9*d.* to 50*s.* As sharp a fall overtook Thomas Firth and John Brown—down 8*s.* 9*d.* to 3⅓—when the tax-free dividend was reduced from 17½ per cent. to 12½ per cent. No better evidence could be found that big profits and bumper dividends cannot be earned on war contracts than in the accounts of Short Brothers, the builders of the famous flying-boats. Their profits and dividends were both down as were those of Swan, Hunter, the shipbuilders. All this is proof positive that there is no profit in this war for equity shares and that there is no hedge against inflation in the possession of them. Which is as it should be. There is some point, therefore, in the suggestions of a firm of brokers for a " victory portfolio " which consists mainly of the " down-and-out " equities and the defaulted bonds. Investors are, nevertheless hanging on to their first-class equity shares, partly as a matter of patriotism, partly in anticipation of the boom (possibly short-lived), which will catch hold of the market when the armistice is signed. I would not quarrel with them on that account, but this is no justification for advancing share prices too high in what may be the middle of the war. My advice is not to run after shares, but to keep to the few sheltered, stable-dividend equities which offer a yield basis of 5½ per cent. to 7½ per cent., such as Imperial Chemical at 29*s.* 3*d.* yielding 5.5 per cent. on the 8 per cent. dividend.

* * *

The extraordinary rise in Courtaulds this week from 27*s.* to 31*s.* is another sign that investors do not keep their heads about ordinary shares. You would think that the shares ought to fall on the announcement that the Treasury has requisitioned its American subsidiary, the Viscose Corporation. Instead they rise in anticipation of a share bonus or a return of capital! The American subsidiary stands valued in the books of Courtaulds at £16½ millions. The price offered by the Treasury is said to be between £25 millions and £30 millions. In addition, the net liquid assets of Courtaulds work out at £9 millions. To repay 10*s.* in the £ on every share would require only £12 millions—which is what the company actually has in cash, gilt-edged and other marketable securities. These are the facts which have excited the market. But why should Courtaulds make a return of capital to shareholders now when the directors cannot possibly foresee what the post-war capital requirements are likely to be. Perhaps they will be buying the Viscose Corporation. Anyway, it is more patriotic for the directors to lend the sterling proceeds of the requisitioning to the Treasury as a loan than to hand it out in part to shareholders " on trust." Whether Courtaulds are over-valued or under-valued at 31*s.* depends entirely on their earning power. Their last dividend was 8 per cent. and since then they have been subjected to a more severe restriction of the home trade. There seems to be no need to rush after these shares in spite of the high " break-up " value of 25*s.*

* * *

I am glad to see that Dr. Paul Einzig in the money columns of *The Financial News* takes up my plea for " concentration of production " in the City. He applies the Board of Trade principles to the banking world. He suggests, first, the amalgamation during the war of the City banks engaged in foreign business; secondly, a rationalisation of the big joint stock banks involving a " drastic reduction in the number of their superfluous branches." The result would be not only a great saving in overhead charges (which are much higher than they should be), but a big release of man-power for the fighting Services. Competition between the " big five " banks is a fantastic anomaly—kept alive only by the feeling among bank directors that they must " introduce " accounts to justify their own excessive emoluments as directors. According to Dr. Einzig the increase in bank overhead charges is largely responsible for the Treasury's reluctance to press for a reduction of the Bank Rate and other loan rates.

THE CHARTERED BANK OF INDIA, AUSTRALIA AND CHINA

Statement by the Chairman to be submitted at the 87th ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING to be held on the 2nd April, 1941, at the London Head Office.

As wartime conditions may make it difficult for Shareholders to attend our Annual Meeting, I have decided to give them information regarding the past year's working of the Chartered Bank to which they are entitled, in the form of this Statement which is being sent to them with the Balance Sheet.

This Statement will take the place of the Address usually made by the Chairman, and subsequently circulated in print; the proceedings at the Annual Meeting—which will take place on April 2nd—will be confined to the necessary resolutions to be submitted to the Shareholders present, though there will, of course, be no curtailment at the meeting of the rights of Shareholders to obtain such further information as they may require.

I should be lacking in my duty if I did not draw the Shareholders' attention to the work of the staff both in London and abroad. The Board gladly recognises the efficiency, endurance and loyalty that have so signally contributed to the year's results.

THE BANK'S BALANCE SHEET

Turning to the Balance Sheet itself, I am glad to say that it continues to show further expansion, the total of £76,114,228 being £8,545,431 higher than that of last year, and the highest in the history of the Bank. It also reflects very strikingly the effect of the war, for you will find that our current and other accounts, repayable on demand, again show a large increase of £13,687,102 and stand at £53,378,931. On the other hand, fixed deposits show a decline of £1,844,115, and these two movements indicate the degree to which our clients have been keeping their resources liquid. Bills Payable at £855,833, against £3,605,836 a year ago, show a considerable decrease, but the smallness of the figure is due to our not having received up to date mail information.

On the other side of the Balance Sheet the first item of Cash in Hand, etc., at £11,578,517, as compared with £6,859,010 last year, shows a sharp increase, but I do not think this figure will be considered excessive. This item is, of course, not interest earning, but liquidity in these days must be our first consideration. We have, of course, contributed to the utmost of our ability towards the finance of the war, and the increase in Government and other Securities from £20,624,407 to £27,721,766 wholly represents subscriptions to War Loans at home and abroad. Our holdings are largely of a short-dated character. Bills of Exchange including Treasury Bills, at £7,721,155 show a substantial decrease, but if to this be added the balance of Head Office and Inter Branch Remittances, Drafts, etc., in transit amounting to £5,454,351, and I am confident that Bills in transit considerably exceed this figure, the true figure for Bills of Exchange would show an increase as compared with that of last year. The only other figure showing substantial change is Bills Discounted and Loans, which at £20,640,936 compares with £24,967,792. This is partly explained by the further fall in the Sterling value of the Chinese dollar, but, in common with many other Banks, our clients have not needed to use the facilities we place at their disposal to the same extent as in normal times.

I now come to the Profit and Loss Account, and I am glad to say the result is better than in either of the previous two years. The figure is £400,159 15*s.* 10*d.*, and we are fortunate in not having had to provide this year for depreciation on Securities and other exceptional items. Needless to say, all necessary provisions have been made as well as those for Taxation, both at home and abroad, and, in these days, this item of taxation is particularly heavy. Many of our branches bear local taxation, for which we do not obtain any relief when computing our liability to British taxation, so that some of our profits are in a sense doubly taxed.

The interim dividend paid last October absorbed £150,000, and it is proposed to pay a final dividend of 10 per cent. per annum for the half year to 31st December last, costing a further £150,000, to transfer £50,000 to the Officers' Pension Fund, to write off Premises Account £50,000, and to carry forward the balance of £182,602 9*s.* 11*d.*

Company Meeting

UNITED SERDANG (SUMATRA) RUBBER PLANTATIONS

MR. H. ERIC MILLER'S REVIEW

THE Thirty-third Ordinary General Meeting of The United Serdang (Sumatra) Rubber Plantations, Ltd., was held on March 20th in London.

Mr. H. Eric Miller (the Chairman), who presided, after referring to the domestic affairs of the company, said: During the year 1940 the world supplies of crude rubber amounted to over 1,400,000 tons and the greatest volume put out by the producing industry.

U.S.A. absorption of rubber averaged about 150,000 tons a quarter during the first three quarters and increased to 168,000 tons during the fourth quarter, a total of 619,000 tons in 1940 against 592,000 tons during 1939. Automobile output—the principal consumer of rubber—increased to 4.5 million vehicles against 3.6 million vehicles in 1939.

United Kingdom absorption is estimated at over 140,000 tons and was more than 20,000 tons higher than in 1939.

The absorption of the Continent of Europe during the first quarter of 1940 appears to have been in the neighbourhood of 70,000 tons. After the capitulation of France and the entry of Italy into the war the Continental imports fell sharply, and during the last quarter of 1940 are unlikely to have exceeded 2,000 tons.

The absorption of the remaining countries, measured by their net imports, amounted to about 158,000 tons against 131,000 tons in 1939.

With supplies exceeding 1,400,000 tons and real absorption in the neighbourhood of 1,050,000 tons the stocks outside the regulated areas have increased by roughly 350,000 tons during the year.

The advice we in this country have been given to guide our actions in the event of invasion is not to panic, but to stay put, and I think that this advice is logically applicable to holders of rubber shares. It seems to me foolish to sacrifice interests in this great industry on the strength of current alarms arising from the tension in the Far East. The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.